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**PAGEANTS FOR SPECIAL DAYS
IN THE CHURCH YEAR**

PAGEANTS FOR SPECIAL DAYS IN THE CHURCH YEAR

By

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"DRAMATIZED MISSIONARY STORIES."



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PREFACE

This book is designed for use by churches and schools in their program for the special days of the year. The pageants are simple and easy of production and may be adapted to any platform or stage. The smaller churches, with limited equipment, have been kept in mind. The fact that a stage must be made over or changed should add zest and pleasure to the production. Many auditoriums are not provided with a curtain. To meet that need the pageants have been so arranged that the characters may leave the stage at the end of a scene in a seemingly natural manner or in processions.

The aim in production should be to present an artistic and beautiful spectacle, which shall convey a message not only to the audience but to the members of the cast as well. It is hoped that this book may enable many churches to acceptably recognize the outstanding days of the year by the use of dramatic presentation in which the young people and children of the church school participate.



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WHAT THE YEAR BROUGHT

A pageant for the last night
of the Old Year

Characters

In order of appearance.

ENOS
AMOS
ALEX
ALFRED
DANIEL
NORMAN
THOMAS
CALEB
HERALD

} Of the people.

KING, the Old Year.

MESSENGER, one of the crowd.

THE HOURS, twelve little girls.

ANGEL OF FAIR PLAY.

JUSTICE.

LOVE, a tiny girl about four, if possible with curls.

NEW YEAR, a tiny boy, as little as possible yet able
to take part.

Costumes

Men and Women. Some as laborers and peasants,
the women with shawls over heads. Others bet-

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ter dressed. All walks of life may be represented. Strive toward ancient or European costumes.

Enos, Amos, Alex, Alfred, Daniel, Norman, Caleb. Similar to men above. Some rather more poorly dressed than others.

Thomas. As a poor old man.

Herald. White suit, blue cape, wide brimmed hat with feathers. Carries a long golden trumpet.

Messenger. Plain dark clothes—no hat.

King. A short, sack-like garment of gray, no sleeves, tied about waist by cord. Over this, and completely hiding it, a long, full robe of purple trimmed with gold, which he keeps wrapped about himself. He should have gray hair and beard and wear a crown of gold.

The Hours. Twelve little girls in bright colored gowns of organdy or cheese cloth or tissue paper. The gowns should be of different colors, short, full skirts, tight waists, low necks and sleeveless. They may wear white socks or be barefooted. The Dennison Mfg. Co., Framingham, Mass., have a booklet "Costumes of Crepe Paper," which they will send upon request.

Angel of Fair Play. Loose costume of white, long sleeves, no wings or crown.

Love. A dress of pale pink maline with a *huge* bow in the back.

Justice. Grecian sleeveless costume of pale blue, with gold band from shoulders crossing in front and meeting at waist in back. Gold bands about hair. (See Grecian picture.)

The New Year. A tiny suit of white metal cloth, similar in style to a one-piece bathing suit.

WHAT THE YEAR BROUGHT

Properties

Throne and Seats. These may be made by using chairs or benches over which have been draped coverings of appropriate material. Dark wine-colored portieres may be effectively used.

Scales may be made of cardboard and wire large enough to hold a sheet from a book. See illustration in dictionary.

Roll. A piece of paper rolled up.

Book. This should be constructed of cardboard and rested on a wooden support. Make two covers 3 by 1½ feet and place as though book were open. Have three loose sheets of paper resting on covers.

Trumpet for Herald. Roll a sheet of white cardboard, making smaller at one end. Cover with gilt paper.

Throne Room. Dark, rich draperies or portieres at back and sides will suggest the room.

SCENE I

Throne room of King. Throne at center back may be as elaborate or as simple as desired. On either side of throne is a narrow seat, almost as high as throne. At rear left the Book of the Hours.

People enter by twos and threes, join themselves to other groups. All appear discontented, sullen, rebellious. They murmur and gesticulate until the appearance is that of an angry mob.

Enos. Well, why talk any more?

Amos. Well, why not talk? Surely we have enough to talk about.

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Alex. Did any people ever have more of which to complain?

Alfred. How could they?

Norman. We have nothing but a king.

Alfred. A king who promised much but who has failed to keep his promises.

David. He promised us wealth but most of us are poor. Only the king is rich.

Norman. He promised us more than wealth. He promised us wisdom and knowledge, but I have not noticed that many are wiser than before.

(All laugh.)

Thomas. (Old and tired.) He promised us health, strength, and vigor, but age has come upon us. Some of us are weary and ill.

Norman. Again the king has deceived us.

Caleb. He promised us happiness, but do we look like a happy crowd?

All. No, no, we are not happy.

Norman. Again the king has failed us!

Alfred. Why allow him to reign longer. I say it is time for a new king.

All. A new king.

Norman. Let us banish this king and find another.

All. Banish the king! Banish the king! *(Enter Herald with trumpet.)*

Herald. The king comes! Long live the king! *(The crowd ceases to talk but murmurs may be heard. Enter king.)*

King. Why these angry looks and sullen mutterings? *(Silence.)* Speak, why are you gathered here?

Caleb. We are a discontented people, O king.

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Many were your promises to us but none have been kept. It is time for a change. You have failed us. We would have a new king.

All. A new king! A new king!

King. Justice, justice! Grant me justice!

Caleb. You have had justice, O king.

King. Perhaps as you see it but not as I understand it. I will yield up the throne even as you ask, only grant me justice before I leave. Allow even the king to be tried.

Caleb (to mob). What do you say?

Norman. Grant his request. What difference can it make?

Caleb (to mob). Do you agree?

All. Yes, give him a trial!

Caleb (to Messenger). Go, summon Justice. (*Exit Messenger.*)

King. Let the pages of your memory turn backward and let your thoughts see the deeds of the past. Let the Hours appear! (*Enter the Hours who give the Dance of the Hours, an interpretative folk-dance or they may simply run across stage. Then they take places in the background. Enter Messenger.*)

Messenger. Behold the Angel of Fair Play. (*Enter Angel.*)

Angel. I come not alone. Behold, Justice is my companion. (*Enter Justice with scales, closely followed by a small child.*)

Caleb. What is that that follows Justice?

Angel. It is Love for Love must always accompany Justice if people are to read her judgments aright.

Justice. Let the case against the king proceed.

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Mob. Banish him, banish him! (*Love covers her face with her hands and steps behind Justice.*)

Angel. Love is not pleased. A king cannot be banished without a cause. Let the king sit on the throne while you state your reasons. (*King takes seat.*)

Norman. We have plenty of reasons. He promised us wealth. We have it not. He promised us health. We have it not. He promised us wisdom. We have it not.

Love. Give me your complaints. (*Takes roll from Norman and puts it into one side of scale of Justice.*)

Angel. You blame the king for your misfortunes and you forget the benefits he has bestowed upon you.

Mob. He has not kept his promises.

Angel. Let the records be heard. (*Two of the Hours dance over and open the big book. Love comes into view and stands beside Justice. The Angel reads silently for awhile.*)

Angel. All his promises are written here.

Norman. So we said.

Mob. Banish him! Banish him!

Angel (*lifting right hand*). Silence! I would read further. It is written here that when the king first came to you he brought peace to your land; he established trade; he encouraged manufacture. As a result many men became prosperous, some even wealthy, and a few amassed great fortunes. In time these men forgot that the wealth was not their own but was a trust. For the king had given it to them, not for personal gain, but to benefit the kingdom. These

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men made themselves rich by keeping others poor. (*Angel ceases to read, looks at mob, which is silent and uneasy.*) And you blame your king for your poverty! (*Love removes the page and places it on other side of the scale. The scale dips down. Justice looks at scale.*)

Justice (to people). You are weighed in the balance and found wanting!

Angel (looking in Book). Again I read, that to certain ones he gave knowledge and bade them bless the land. Some grew weary at the task and ceased to work. Others became so interested in learning for its own sake that they forgot the people. So you have some with much learning and little wisdom, others with little of either. (*Pause.*) And you blame your king! (*Love removes the page and places it in the scale. Again it is the heavier side.*)

Justice (to people). You are weighed in the balance and found wanting!

Angel. Again I read that he brought religion into the land. But so peaceful was the country, so kind the king, so favored the people that they forgot the meaning of religion and began to quarrel over dogmas and creeds. Instead of blessing has come strife. "Instead of the myrtle has come up the brier." (*Pause.*) Is not this so? (*Love places sheet in balance, scale weighs down.*)

Justice. You are weighed in the balance and found wanting!

Thomas (to Angel). All this may be true but even so it does not render the king guiltless. We have other grievances. Not only has he failed to keep his promises, but he has robbed the people of

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treasures they once possessed. When we (*pointing to a group of men close by*) entered the service of the king we were younger, we had ambition and the prospects of happiness. Now youth is passing, ambition is gone, and bitterness, rather than happiness, fills our lives. I for one am unwilling to serve him longer. (*While he is speaking Love goes slowly over and hides behind Justice.*)

Mob. So are we! (*Enter old man.*)

Norman (*in surprise*). Here comes Ernest.

(*Mob relaxes and gazes with friendliness at Ernest.*)

Norman. Greetings, Ernest.

Ernest (*with a motion of his hand*). And to you, the same, (*indicates the mob*) and to you.

(*Mob smiles and bows.*)

Ernest. May I speak?

Norman. Of course, Ernest. What have you to say?

Ernest (*to mob*). Will you listen to what I have to say? (*Men nod heads.*) It is true that we have had hard work, but are we not stronger for it? We have had sorrow, but has it not made us more sympathetic toward others who suffer? We are losing youth, but are we not gaining experience? (*The faces in the mob become thoughtful. Love steps half into sight, listens.*) Our children are taller, our boys stronger, our maidens lovelier. Our king has not failed us. Had we served him better and thought less of ourselves we might all be richer and wiser today. (*Love steps into full view, smiling.*)

Justice. Love thinks he speaks truly. Do you agree? (*People hang their heads.*)

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Norman (to mob). Ernest is right. We have been blind. We have been thinking of ourselves and our own profit. The king has tried to think of all.

Angel. How does it happen that this one man seems to understand when the rest of you could not?

Norman. I know not unless it be his manner of living. He cares little for either wealth or learning. He lives in a little house by the side of the road, where the sons of men pass by. He calls greetings to them as they pass. The weary pause to rest in the shade by the well, and Ernest brings them a cooling drink. The hungry find food at his table. The troubled find understanding. The youth find advice and counsel, and the little children smiles and goodies. He knows us better than we know ourselves. (*Love skips over and takes Ernest by the hand.*)

Justice. So! He has been so busy serving others he has forgotten himself? Yet to me he seems not old, nor poor, nor unlearned.

Alfred. Aye, it seems so.

Justice. He has the wealth of which no one can rob him, the learning books cannot give. He knows the joy of service so great that self is forgotten. (*Holds the scales so they balance.*) His many acts of kindness shall balance your foolishness and blindness. Because of him you shall be given another chance, your wish shall be granted. You shall have a new king. This one shall go.

Mob. No, no, let him remain!

Norman. We would make amends.

Angel. That may not be. His rule is over. But his son shall sit on the throne. To him you may render the service you failed to give his father. (*To*

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king) Your reign is over, (*King rises*) but you have had Justice. The faults charged against you were untrue. The people have failed to appreciate their privileges. But your work is not lost. Your son shall profit by it.

King. It is well. I yield my throne to him. (*Removes crown and places it on throne. Chimes off-stage begin to strike twelve. King rises and throws off robes, stands revealed as the Old Year. The Hours skip in and take his hands and surround him and escort him off stage.*) The Old Year must go.

Voice (off-stage). The New Year comes! Prepare the way for the New Year. (*The Hours escort him in skipping and dancing and crying, Happy New Year! Happy New Year! The New Year ascends the throne, puts on crown and smiles upon the people.*)

Mob. Our new king! Our new king!

Angel. May he rule well with Love and Justice as his chief advisers. (*Love takes place at right of king, Justice on left.*) (*To people*) And may you serve him well.

People. All hail to the New Year.

Angel (going toward entrance). A happy New Year to all. (*Exit Angel.*)

People (one to another). Happy New Year, Happy New Year! (*King stands throughout the above, smiling.*)

(CURTAIN)

(*In case there is no curtain the people may run off stage shouting Happy New Year. The Hours escort the King; Justice and Love follow.*)

LINCOLN'S PREPARATION FOR SERVICE

A Presentation for Lincoln's Birthday

*One or more of the scenes may be omitted if desired.
Other poems may be introduced or substituted for the ones suggested.*

Characters

THE CUSTODIAN OF HISTORY, a woman.

THE READER, a young man.

LINCOLN, a boy.

LINCOLN, a young man.

LINCOLN, a man.

SLAVES, men and women.

CAPTAIN, Northern.

SOLDIERS, (five) Northern.

COLOR-BEARER.

MEN.

The following characters do not appear on stage:

DRUMMER.

BUGLER.

ORCHESTRA.

CHORUS.

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Costumes

Custodian. Grecian robe of blue, a scroll in hand.

Reader. Ordinary suit.

Lincoln, the boy. Plain, rough knee-pants, dark shirt, bare-footed, hair tumbled.

Lincoln, the young man. Plain, rough clothes.

Lincoln, the man. Black suit and hat, beard. See picture.

Slaves. Bright colors for women. Cheap clothes for men.

<i>Captain</i>	}	Suits of blue.
<i>Soldiers</i>		
<i>Color-bearer</i>		
<i>Men.</i>		

Citizens' clothes.

SCENE I

Time: Morning.

Place: Outdoor scene. In order to avoid a long wait between Scene I and II it would be well to have the platform arranged for Scene II, but hidden from audience by means of folding screens. The screens should be covered with leaves and branches and so provide the background for Scene I. Little space will be needed for Scene I.

Enter Custodian, L. She advances to center and speaks.

Custodian: I am called the Custodian of History, for it is my task to record all events as they occur, and to place within my books the names of men worthy of being remembered.

Today I would turn back for you the pages of history, and let you read again from the life of one who

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helped to make this country what it is; who worked for freedom and for justice; whose praises now are sung throughout the world; whose nobleness is known to every boy and girl; whose name brings admiration and respect—Lincoln, the man of the people. First, I shall show you Lincoln the boy. (*She steps to one side. Lincoln in shirt sleeves, with axe on shoulder, enters L., and walks slowly to center of stage, stands looking at trees with face turned from audience, while Custodian repeats verse.*)

Custodian:

“His was the dream-filled world of kindly trees,
And myriad reaches of the prairie lands;
The brotherhood of fields, and birds, and bees,
Which magnifies the soul that understands.

His was the school of unremitting toil.
Whose lessons leave an impress strong and deep;
His were the thoughts of one close to the soil,
The knowledge of the ones who sow and reap.”

—Nesbit.

(*Lincoln walks off stage, R.*)

SCENE II

Time: Evening.

Place: Interior of country home, plain but clean. A window at back with mended but faded curtain. On door hangs a skin of an animal. A plain table and chair, R. A fireplace, with fire burning, at L. His shovel with figures on it stands near. The fire may be provided by placing cans of Sterno in a basin with wood placed around it. The Sterno cans should be

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hidden by the wood but so placed that the flames will show above the wood. If preferred an electric light covered with red tissue paper may represent the fire. Fastened to the wall is a rough, wooden shelf on which are Lincoln's books, Robinson Crusoe, Pilgrim's Progress, the Bible, and Aesop's Fables. The books should be well-used ones. (Off-stage, orchestra plays, "Home, Sweet Home." Enter Custodian.)

Custodian. The boy grew toward manhood, tall in stature, broad in mind, and kind in spirit. To enter the past, to know the present, and to pierce the future, by means of books, was his desire. But books were few within his home, for poverty was there. To borrow from his neighbors' shelves was Lincoln's only way. Each book he read and pondered long over what it gave. (*Guardian steps back. Orchestra plays softly, "Home, Sweet Home" as Lincoln enters, L., walks to shelf, looks at books, takes one down, goes to fire-place, tosses a piece of light wood on the fire, stretches himself in front of it on the floor. He opens his book and begins to read, Custodian begins to speak but before she finishes Lincoln takes his eyes from the book and gazes into the fire as if lost in thought.*)

Custodian.

"A peaceful life—just toil and rest—all his desire;

To read the books he liked the best

Beside the cabin fire—

God's word and man's;—to peer sometimes

Above the page, in smouldering gleam,

And catch, like far heroic rhymes,

The monarch of his dreams." J. W. Riley

(CURTAIN)

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SCENE III

Time: Twilight.

Place: Outside of a slave's cabin.

The screens may be placed again, if desired. By using a few additional plants, flowers, and seats the appearance can easily be changed from that of Scene I.

Singing off-stage by chorus, "Way Down South in Dixie." At close of song Custodian enters.

Custodian. Ere long a cloud of deepening blackness rose and rested in dense shadows upon his beloved land. For, lo, his brothers, though of a darker hue, were sold for gain. It chanced one day that Lincoln witnessed a slave sold from the auction block. His wrath rose high at such injustice. A vow to heaven he made, that if ever the time came when he could strike a blow at the evil, he would strike it hard. Little did he dream how soon that vow would be fulfilled, nor think that his would be the hand that freed the slaves. But so it was. His sterling worth, his honesty, his justice and fair dealings were recognized. In him was seen a leader for the country. To be the President of this nation, torn by conflict, became his task. (*Curtain, raised, shows group of slaves, L., near front of platform. They sing, "Massa Dear," found in many collections of songs. Lincoln enters, R., stands watching the group. As singing ends, Lincoln speaks.*)

Lincoln. A nation cannot exist, half-slave and half free. I shall sign the Emancipation Proclamation. (*Curtain. Enter Reader goes to C., front, recites, "The Stroke of Justice" by Lyman Whitney Allen in "The Praise of Lincoln," Bobbs-Merrill Co.*)

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Custodian. An act so bold, so significant, brought clamor, dispute, and war. Gone were the joys of companionship, the happy homes, the care-free days. All was excitement, confusion, and battle. (*Roll of drums off-stage. Curtain raised.*)

SCENE IV

Time: Evening.

Scene: Officer's camp. In front of a small tent at a little table sits the captain. A camp-fire R., with tripod and kettle. Have a large can of Sterno in a dish under the kettle but hidden by the wood. This will cause the steam to issue from the kettle adding an effective bit of realism. Five or six soldiers sitting about or lying on the ground. White light will suggest moonlight. One of the men sings three stanzas of "Tenting Tonight on the Old Camp Ground," all the men join in the chorus. As singing ends a bugler, off-stage, sounds the call, "To Arms." Men jump to their feet. Color-bearer, excited, rushes in with flag.

Color-bearer. We are surrounded! The enemy is everywhere. (*The Captain grasps the flag, holds it high as he speaks.*)

Captain. Then *through* the enemy's lines to victory we will go. Follow the flag! (*Rushes off stage, other men follow. Sounds of drums growing more and more distant.*)

SCENE V

Scene: Same as Scene IV, but without the tent.

LINCOLN'S PREPARATION

Custodian. Heavy upon the shoulders of him who sat in the President's chair did rest the burdens of the day. Old he grew and bent with the sorrows and heartaches of his people. Still the war raged on. (Off-stage, "Taps" are played. Lincoln and a group of men enter R. Men stand about in different locations. Lincoln gives the address at Gettysburg. Chorus seated in front rows and men on stage sing first and last stanzas of "America." Roll of drums. Lincoln and men leave stage. Curtain.)

SCENE VI

Time: Present.

Place: The platform in its accustomed appearance.

Custodian. All this was long ago. The din of war has ceased; happiness and prosperity reign in the land. He who stood at the nation's head during those dark days is not forgotten. He lives today in the memory and love of every American; aye, in the hearts of all mankind he is revered as one of the world's greatest heroes—Abraham Lincoln. (Curtain drawn. At center of stage is an easel, on which stands a large picture of Abraham Lincoln. Below and in front of it is a large basket of flowers. Above the picture, the American flag. A good reader may render,

"Men saw no portents on that night.

A hundred years ago," by Edwin Markham, found in "Washington and Lincoln in Poetry." The organist plays "America the Beautiful." The Custodian signals for the audience to stand. All unite in singing the song.)

LEADING A NATION

A Washington's Birthday Production

Characters

FIRST MAN
SECOND MAN
FIRST WOMAN
SECOND WOMAN
MEN AND WOMEN
WASHINGTON
ADAMS
JEFFERSON
AMERICA
WAR
PEACE
A YOUTH
SPIRIT OF '76 (Three men)
STRETCHER BEARERS
PROPHECY
NURSE

Costumes

The men and women should be dressed in colonial costume.

Washington. Similar to his picture.

Adams. Similar to his picture.

Jefferson. Similar to his picture.

LEADING A NATION

War. Draperies of flaming red, long, flowing sleeves, flowing scarf about head and shoulders. Very little of face should show. Stockings to match. Carries sword.

Peace. Grecian costume of white.

America. Loose, white, sleeveless gown; from shoulders hangs a cape of blue lined with bright red. On her head a crown of gold, on her feet white stockings, no modern shoes.

A Youth. One of the people.

Spirit of '76 Men. (See picture of that name.)

Nurse. Conventional white garb.

Stretcher Bearers. Soldier suits of blue.

Prophecy. Grecian robe of bright blue, tied with cord of gold.

Time: 1776, just before the Declaration of Independence was signed.

Place: In front of Independence Hall.

If given indoors the platform may be made to resemble out-doors by use of small trees, branches, potted plants, and flowers. The platform should be on two levels, the lower one deeper than the upper, which need be only about four feet wide. The two should be connected by a flight of five steps at center. Independence Hall is supposed to be just beyond the upper platform, left. The production could be on one level but the effect will not be so good.

(*Enter two men on lower level, stop and look in direction of Hall.*)

First Man. They have been in there a long time.

Second Man. This matter needs serious discussion.

(*Enter two women, approach men.*)

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First Woman. Have you heard what is going on in the Hall?

First Man. They are considering the resolution introduced by Robert Henry Lee.

Second Woman. He wants the colonies to be free.

Second Man. To break with England and be independent.

First Woman. That is a bold thing to do. (*More men and women enter.*)

Second Woman. England will never permit it.

First Man. Some think the men should sign, others that they should not. We shall know which they do, for if they sign, the bell will ring out the news.

First Woman. They said we should know. (*Bell off-stage begins to ring.*)

Mob. The bell!

First Man. They have signed!

Mob. The bell! They have signed! We are free! Hurrah! Hurrah! (*The people move toward steps as Washington, Adams, and Jefferson come onto upper level and move down the steps.*)

Washington. Life, Liberty, Pursuit of happiness—

Adams. Those are things worth striving for.

Jefferson. (*Pauses, reads from paper in his hand.*) That these colonies are, and, of right, ought to be free and independent states. (*The mob cheers and laughs and gathers closely about the three signers.*)

First Man. What shall we be called?

Second Man. United Colonies.

First Man. Not colonies—States.

Mob. United States! United States!

Washington. United States of America!

LEADING A NATION

Adams. We no longer belong to England. We now belong to America.

All. America! America! (*On upper landing appears America. Mob sees her, becomes quiet with astonishment.*)

America. (*Bewildered.*) You called me?

First Man. Who are you?

America. I am the spirit of America, the new-born nation.

Mob. (*Shouts.*) America!

America. How shall we build this new nation?

Adams. In union there is strength.

Washington. We must stand together under one flag.

First Man. Flag? We have no flag. England's flag is no longer ours. (*Mob is quiet.*)

Youth. Not so. I know where a woman sits sewing on a new flag.

Second Man. Why should she make a new flag?

Youth. She knew the colonies would break away from England and so she has been making a new flag for us. I'll bring her. (*Exit boy.*)

First Man. Our own flag!

Second Woman. What will it be like, I wonder?

Betsy Ross (*off-stage*). But it is not finished. This is just the pattern.

Youth (*off-stage*). Never mind. The people must see it. (*Enter boy on upper platform, pulling Betsy Ross by the arm. She is carrying the flag in her arms. The mob begins to cheer. Washington and Adams go up steps and with Betsy Ross and Youth hold up the flag.*)

(*The Betsy Ross flag may be made by covering the*

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star field of an American flag with dark blue material onto which a circle of thirteen stars has been basted.)

Mob. (Sings.) My Country, 'Tis of Thee.

America. How shall we protect this new country?

First Man. We all will, but we cannot say how.

America. Shall I show you?

Mob. Yes! Yes! (Enter War.)

America. War must come. He is here already. (Advances to America, hands her his sword. America takes it and holds it aloft. The women hide their faces and fall to their knees. The men gaze upon the sword. Peace comes and stands just within the entrance.) Only so, will Peace come to this new nation. Who shall lead us? Who has the vision of Peace, and is strong enough to hold it through all the suffering and heartache that war shall bring? (All eyes turn gradually to Washington. His eyes are still on the sword and he is unconscious of their looks.)

Adams. Yonder stands the man, O America.

Mob. Washington! Washington! (Washington turns in surprise.)

Adams. He is already deep in the love of his countrymen; he would be a leader in peace or in war.

America. A man, first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen. (Comes down steps, approaches Washington. Gives him the sword.) To you I entrust the leadership of this nation, newly born. (War and Peace approach Washington but stand at a distance behind him. To the people.) Will you follow this leader?

Mob. We will.

War. (Rushes through mob.) But I shall first

LEADING A NATION

show the way. (*People shrink back and gradually disperse as War circles the stage.*)

America. Cease your boasting! We follow you only to find Peace later. We follow you, not because we would, but because we must. Begone! (*War withdraws. America takes Peace by the hand and approaches Washington.*) Let not War confuse you even though for a time you must be with him. Peace is America's real friend.

Washington. (*Salutes.*) I accept your commission, America, and I will remember your words. (*Turns toward Peace.*) To Peace, then, my sword, my heart, my life, if need be. (*Washington leaves platform followed by Adams. At a short distance walks Peace with hands uplifted as if in benediction. America watches them out of sight with a look of satisfaction.*)

(CURTAIN)

SCENE II

Time. Sometime later.

Place. Same. America on upper level.

(*Roll of drums off-stage. Enter three men on lower level with fife and drum and dressed as in "Spirit of '76."* They circle stage and pass off. Then war marches gloriously across stage. America turns her head away until War is out of sight. Washington, ready for War, passes by. Following him, two men with a stretcher, a nurse. Drum should play as persons pass.)

America. Can this lead to Peace? (*Peace stands*

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just within the entrance on lower level. Prophecy enters upper level and sings "America, America, Thy Shouts of War Shall Cease," in almost any hymnal. During singing Peace advances toward steps and stands at foot gazing up at America.)

(CURTAIN)

SCENE III

Same as Scene I.

America stands in center of upper platform. Washington and Adams sit on steps.

Adams. It is difficult to believe that the war is over, and that we are actually free from England.

Washington. What will we do with our freedom? Will it prove to be worth the price?

Adams. We must make it so.

Washington. Yes, we must make it so. The people must realize that America is now their home. We have broken with England. We cannot return.

Adams. No one would wish to.

Washington. We must do more than have our people satisfied. We must so build and grow that England will recognize the wisdom of our stand.

Adams. (*Looks quickly at Washington.*) That will never be!

Washington. It must be! Time must bring a friendship between England and America. It is for us to lay the foundation of a republic that can be admired and respected.

Adams. How do you plan to do this?

Washington. First, War must be forgotten and

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put from our minds. We must plan for Peace. Education and business must fill the land until the thought of peace shall be established.

Adams. How can that be? Why, even our flag speaks of war.

Washington. It will not for long. We shall teach the children that red stands for courage, the kind it takes to lead a noble life. White stands for character, the kind American boys and girls must develop.

Adams. And the blue?

Washington. The field of blue must come to mean loyalty—to our nation, to our flag, to each other. The stars will represent ideals and dreams, for without them there could be no nation.

Adams. I see. You would make the flag beautiful in every way.

Washington. That is it. (*Rises.*) Can you not see it—Red for courage, (*makes motion with hand to indicate stripes as he speaks*) White for character, a field of Blue for loyalty, and on it the gleaming white of ideals?

Adams. (*Rises.*) I do. In other words you would have each one feel that he is helping to make this flag of ours.

Washington. It will be what we make it, nothing more—this American flag.

Adams. I see, you would have the flag stand for the things a citizen should be.

Washington. I would not trust to the flag alone. I would teach also the ways of God. Blessed is the people whose God is the Lord.

Adams. America will be a Christian nation, of course.

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Washington. It must be kept so. It will not be so without effort. Though we be a small nation our youth must be the equal of those in any other country.

Adams (with enthusiasm). They will be. The world shall yet be proud of the American nation.

Washington. I believe the time will come when she will share in the work of the world. Our work is to make the beginning. This I purpose to do by developing a Christian patriotism. We must teach them to love our new flag with its red for courage, its white for character, its blue for loyalty, and its gleaming stars for ideals. With it we must place the flag of Christ. United, the two will prove a worthy guide as America advances. (*Enter young man with American flag, L. Advances to side of America. Audience sings, "O, Say, Can You See." Just before it is finished a young woman with Christian flag comes on R. They cross flags just back of America. Audience sings, "In the Cross of Christ I Glory." Just before the singing ends Peace enters L., stands back but higher than America. She places a white dove (artificial) on America's shoulder. America advances down steps, is joined by Washington and Adams. They lead off the platform and down aisle, the two flag bearers next, then Peace. Following her are the children of the Sunday School, who enter left and right, each waving small American flag, and all singing "America the Beautiful." Down one aisle, up the other, and out of the room. The audience joins in the singing.*)

TRIUMPHANT GLADNESS

A Pageant for Easter

Characters

MARY

MARTHA

LAZARUS

SALOME

MARY MAGDALENE

PETER

A PREACHER

A FRANCISCAN MONK

A PILGRIM FATHER

A MISSIONARY

A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER

GROUP OF YOUNG MEN

GROUP OF HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS

THE HOME MAKERS, six married couples

KINDERGARTEN AND PRIMARY CHILDREN

ANGEL OF THE RESURRECTION

CHORUS OR CHOIR

Costumes

Salome Oriental costumes. They should wear loose
Mary robes reaching to the floor, and with long
Martha pointed sleeves. The costumes should be of
the deeper shades, with a sash of bright color or

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striped material tied **about** the waist. Scarfs or mantles are worn over the head. The long scarfs may be fastened in various ways. A wide mantle may be worn if desired. This falls from the head over shoulders and dress. Jewelry should be generously used. No modern shoes should be worn. Sandals may be worn, or the characters may walk in their stockings.

Mary Magdalene. Similar to the other women but brighter and richer.

Lazarus The men should wear tunics of white or bright colors, with long but not pointed sleeves. A sleeveless coat of bright material may be worn over the tunic. This coat should be open all the way down the front, not meeting even at the neck. The coat may be easily made from a blanket, or cloth of sufficient width and length, by folding the outer edges in upon the cloth about ten inches. Sew securely, and let the sewed part rest on the shoulders. This makes a straight back and two straight fronts. The arms are under the mantle but free. On his head the Oriental usually wears a square of bright colored material. One end is turned in and placed over the forehead, and the square so draped that it falls over the shoulders. It is held in place by means of a twisted piece of black cloth. A turban effect may be made from the square or scarf, if preferred. This requires no sewing, but is wound about the head and the end tucked securely under. If correctly done it will not become loosened in hours of wearing.

TRIUMPHANT GLADNESS

A preacher. Typical minister's apparel.

A Franciscan Monk. Robe of brown, light cord, no head covering, sandals.

A Pilgrim Father. Puritan dress.

Missionary. Ordinary clothes.

Angel of Resurrection. A long flowing robe of white, long sleeves. Wings made from thin white metal cloth (*the inexpensive kind*), and tinted a soft pink. The upper part of the wings only should be wired, the lower, being left free, will move gracefully with the movements of the body. A halo made of a circular piece of cardboard, gilded and decorated, is worn at the back of the head, one half appearing above the head. A ribbon band brought across the forehead, round the head and through the halo will hold it in place.

All other characters. Ordinary American clothes.

SCENE I

Time: Morning; after Crucifixion.

Place: Home of Mary and Martha.

Mary is sitting at right, toward front. Her thoughts are far away. She seems unconscious of her surroundings. Her attitude is one of sorrowful dreaming. Martha enters with water jar, which she places on floor, leaves stage, and returns with a dish. She busies herself at table for a moment. Then moves toward opening and looks out. She returns to table, works a moment or two longer, then again goes to opening and looks out.

Martha. Oh that Lazarus would come! (*Mary*

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seems not to hear. Martha continues to look.) All night he hath remained in the city. (Martha goes back to the table, turns and looks at Mary, then leaves stage. After a brief absence she returns with a goblet and approaches Mary.)

Martha. Drink this cooling draught, sister. It will ease thy suffering. (*Mary raises hand and motions it away.*) Thou hast not moved from this place since we returned last evening, nor hast thou touched food. Drink this! (*Offers it to her again.*)

Mary (wearily). I care not for it. (*Martha places goblet on table, goes again to door.*)

Martha. Thinkest thou harm hath befallen our brother? He hath not been in favor with the priests since our dear Master brought him again to life. If he could bring Lazarus to life, why could he not save himself? (*Drops her head in her arms as if weeping. After a moment she slowly returns, picks up some hand work, and seats herself at a short distance from Mary. Lazarus enters L.*)

Martha (rising quickly). Brother, at last thou art come! (*Goes to him.*) Tell us what thou knowest!

Mary. (Looks at him.) Brother! (*Drops her head in her arms as if overcome with grief. Lazarus goes to Mary, places hand on her bowed head.*)

Lazarus. Quiet thy sobbing and I will tell thee what I know. (*Martha sits near Mary. Lazarus remains standing.*)

Lazarus. Thou did see the darkness, Mary, that was over the land from the sixth hour until the ninth; thou didst hear his cries, and feel the earthquake; thou didst see the graves open and the saints walking about,

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This did happen while thou wert near to the cross, Mary.

Martha (to Mary). And after I had left thee to go to the aid of Salome.

Lazarus. Aye, (*to Martha*) as Mary told thee, Martha, when even was come Joseph of Arimathea, who hath secretly been one of the Master's disciples, went to Pilate and begged for the body of Jesus. Pilate gave orders that Joseph should have it. When Joseph had received the body, he wrapped it in clean linen and bore it away.

Mary. It was then I came away.

Lazarus. Joseph had the body placed in a new tomb in his own garden, where he can lovingly care for it.

Mary. We can go there sometimes and so be near him.

Lazarus. Aye, for surely Joseph will welcome the Master's friends.

Mary. (Rises.) I would go now with spices to anoint his dear body.

Martha. (Rises quickly.) Nay, nay, thou art not able. (*To Lazarus.*) She hath not eaten or slept since she returned from the crucifixion.

Mary. (Moves towards center.) It matters not. I would go to him.

Martha. Then I shall go with thee.

(*Enter Salome and Mary Magdalene.*)

Salome. Mary, we have come to thee and Martha.

Martha. Hast thou further news?

Salome. What knowest thou?

Martha. That Joseph had the body of the Master placed in his tomb.

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Salome. Aye, we went to the garden and saw the tomb. While we were there the chief priests came and sealed the stone at the entrance, so that no one might steal the body. They set a watch of two soldiers to guard the place. When the priests had left we stole away lest the soldiers molest us.

Mary. We were going with spices to anoint the body. Wilt thou join us?

Martha. If the tomb is sealed how can we enter with the spices?

Mary. There must be some way.

Mary Magdalene. I will go with thee. At least we can enter the garden.

Martha. I will bring spices and sweet ointment. Tarry ye here. (*Martha leaves stage. Others take seats.*)

Mary. I cannot believe him dead. He who could bring others from the dead must be stronger than death.

Salome. But he let them take him and crucify him. We know he suffered.

Mary Magdalene. Shall I ever forget those torn and bleeding hands! Those hands which had healed so many, which had been laid in blessing on little children, which had ministered to us! I would go and anoint those dear hands even though they are still. (*Enter Martha.*)

Martha. Here are spices and perfumes. Let us be going.

Lazarus. Go ye, but I will remain. I would be alone for awhile. (*The women leave left.*)

(CURTAIN)

TRIUMPHANT GLADNESS

SCENE II

Same as Scene I.

Time: First Day of Week.

Enter Lazarus L. Seats himself where Mary had been sitting. A knock is heard at door.

Lazarus. (Moves toward door.) Who is without?

Peter. It is I, Peter.

Lazarus. (At door.) Enter, Peter. Art thou alone?

Peter. (Enters.) Alone.

Lazarus. (Indicates seat.) Rest thyself, and I will bring thee refreshment.

Peter. Nay, nay, I wish nothing. But wouldst thou give it to me?

Lazarus. I have already offered it to thee. (*Goes to table, fills goblet from jar.*) Drink this and I will bring thee food.

Peter. (Takes goblet.) Art thou still my friend?

Lazarus. What dost thou mean? Have we not been friends, lo, these many months? Were we not both followers of the Master?

Peter. But I denied him! I, who said that though all others might forsake him, I would not! Yet I was the first to deny that I was his disciple. (*Stands up.*) Look at me! Do I look to be a creature of fear? Yet a little serving girl frightened me! When she looked at me and said to the men standing by, "He is one of them," I denied it and said, "I know not this man of whom ye speak." Three different times I denied that I knew him. I, who had been with him on the mountain, I, who had seen him feed the multitude, I, who had walked on the water through his

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power! But suddenly I forgot everything but my own safety and declared that I knew him not. (*Drops to seat, buries his head in his hands.*)

Lazarus. Thou must not reproach thyself. It was but a passing weakness. Thou dost still love the Master.

Peter (*lifting head*). Aye, I do, but he will never know it. I cannot tell him now. I cannot even beg his forgiveness.

Lazarus. He knoweth all things. He knoweth that thou lovest him. Even though he be dead he must know, for surely his death is not like that of others.

Peter. Thou shouldst know, but thy words are small comfort. I denied him. I, who was to be a fisher of men. I, whom he called a rock! I, who was to help him in his work! How could he have thought me worthy? Why did he bid me follow him?

Lazarus. He knew thee, Peter; he knew thee better than thou knoweth thyself. Thou art not weak. Thou art strong, thou art still a rock. We all left him and fled when we saw the soldiers. Thou wert the only one who followed closely enough to be seen with him. We all denied him, by our acts, if not by our words. We were all surprised, and when we saw the soldiers with lanterns and spears we feared for our lives and turned and fled. Thou, alone, tried to defend him. Didst thou not draw thy sword and cut off the ear of one of the men?

Peter. Aye, but the Master told me to put up my sword and he healed the man's ear. . . . and after that I denied him!

Lazarus. Thou knewest not what thou didst say.

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Thy lips alone denied him, thy heart still loved him.

Peter. Aye, if only I might tell him so!

Lazarus. Thou wilt have opportunity to testify for him even yet. We must not forget his teachings. We must tell others of his words. Dost remember how he said, Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.

Peter. Aye. It was one evening when we sat with him on the mountain side.

Lazarus. May he not have meant these words for us, Peter? For surely no one hath ever mourned the passing of a friend as we are mourning the loss of our Master.

Peter. My sorrow is doubled, because, not only have I lost him but I failed him, too.

Lazarus. Thou art unfair to thyself. Thou didst not fail him more than the rest of us. We all forgot for a time. He would be the first to forgive.

Peter (in supplication). Forgive me, O Lord, forgive me. For thy name's sake, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.

Lazarus. When the Master was with us he said, Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Surely he will keep his promise unto thee, Peter. Cease to think of thy denial, but think how thou mayest yet honor him.

Peter. Thy words do comfort me. (*Enter women hurriedly.*)

Mary (going quickly to Lazarus). We went to the tomb but the Master was not there.

Peter and Lazarus. Not there!

Mary. He is risen.

Men. Risen.

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Salome. Do ye not recall that he said he would rise after three days?

Lazarus. How dost thou know he is risen?

Martha. An angel told us.

Lazarus. An angel? Tell us, what hath happened.

Salome. Let Mary tell them. If we all speak we shall confuse them.

Mary. We left here with our spices and our ointment to anoint his body. We spoke little until we were approaching the garden. Then Martha asked, "Who shall roll us away the stone?" For thou dost remember that Salome told us the priests had sealed it. While we were still wondering we entered the garden and approached the tomb. There at the entrance sat an angel.

Lazarus. An angel!

Mary. An angel, all in white. Her raiment was like snow and her countenance like lightning. The whole tomb was wrapped in dazzling whiteness. We were terrified and fell to the ground. The angel said, "Fear not, for I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here. He is risen as he said. Come see the place where he lay."

Peter. Did ye go to the tomb?

Salome. Aye, we went and looked in. We saw the linen cloth in which he had lain, folded, and at one end of the tomb. Another angel was within. He said, "Dost thou not remember that when Jesus was still with you he told you that he must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and that the third day he would arise again?"

Peter. He did tell us that!

Lazarus. He did, but we forgot.

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Martha. The angel told us to go at once and tell his disciples that Jesus had gone into Galilee and we would find him there.

Mary. (*Approaches Peter, places hand on his arm.*) The angel said to tell thee, *Peter*, that thou shouldst see the Master again in Galilee.

Peter (*astonished*). What sayest thou?

Mary. She said tell his disciples and *Peter*.

Peter. Did she call me by name?

Martha and Salome. She did.

Mary. Oh, that thou might have heard her speak thy name! It was like music, so beautifully did she utter it—*Peter*.

Peter. I am not worthy.

Lazarus. Dost thou not understand? Thou art forgiven! It is the Master's message to thee.

Peter. (*Drops on his knees.*) Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name, for thou hast put gladness into my heart. (*Rises.*) I must see the tomb, I must know he is not there. I must know he is risen. (*Peter goes out hurriedly.*)

Lazarus. I am glad for the angel's message. Peter was nigh heartbroken because of his denial. I could give him but scant comfort. He had only reproach for himself.

Mary. Dear Peter, he knows not how much the Master loved him.

Lazarus. Aye, he was very dear to him. (*Enter Mary Magdalene hastily.*)

Mary Magdalene. Friends, I have wonderful news!

Salome. The Lord is risen!

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Mary Magdalene. He is risen indeed, for I have seen him.

Women. Seen him?

Lazarus. Seen the Master? When?

Mary Magdalene. (*Excited, moves as she talks.*)
Ye remember I would not come away with you. I could scarce believe the words of the angel. I did not doubt, but the message was almost too wonderful to be true. I had to be alone for a time. After ye left I went farther into the garden to think of all the strange events of the past few days, and to try to find their meaning. Suddenly a feeling of great peace stole over me. I knew that the Master was risen. Though I could not understand, yet I knew that he was the Son of God, and that he was alive forevermore. Then I heard the one word, "Mary." So many times I had heard it from his lips, I knew it was his voice but I thought it had come through memory. Then I saw him standing before me, with a radiance exceeding that of the angel. Light and life and love were manifest in him. I cried, "Rabboni," and would have fallen at his feet, but he said, "Touch me not. Go tell my disciples that I am alive again, that I shall soon ascend to my Father and to their Father. But before that time I shall meet them in Galilee." I could not question him more. I arose and departed as he said. I came to you at once. Let us go into Galilee, even as he said.

Women. Let us go.

Lazarus. We must go. (*All leave platform.*)

(CURTAIN)

TRIUMPHANT GLADNESS

SCENE III

Scene: An out-door scene.

Time: After the Ascension.

Lazarus, Peter, Salome, Mary Magdalene, Martha and Mary seated.

Lazarus. We shall miss him. After these three years of close companionship it will be strange to live without him.

Peter. We must remember his words, "Lo, I am with you always."

Mary Magdalene. Again he said, "The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, shall teach you all things, and bring to remembrance all that I have said unto you."

Mary. I comfort myself with yet another of his sayings: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Peter. We must begin the tasks he left for us to do—to make disciples of all nations and to teach them all the things he has taught us.

Martha. That means not only our friends but the children of coming generations.

Peter. Thou speakest well, Martha, down through the ages to come shall his name be loved and honored and men blessed because he did live on earth awhile, and is alive forevermore. He bade me be a fisher of men. I see many others who shall fish for men and bring them to the Master. (*A procession of leaders enter L. and cross the platform back of speaker—the preacher, the Franciscan monk, the Pilgrim father, the missionary, the Sunday School teacher.*)

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Singing, off-stage, "Christ for the World We Sing," No. 257, Hymnal for American Youth.)

Lazarus. I shall never speak as thou wilt, Peter, to crowds, but I can talk to the young men and show them how the Master can use them in business, in the church, at home and abroad, wherever a man is found. (*Procession of young men pass by. Singing, off-stage, "Faith of Our Fathers."*)

Mary Magdalene. To those who sorrow for past mistakes, to those who are stumbling along the way I shall go, but not to them alone. I shall go to the young maidens who have not fallen, and I shall point them to the highroad of virtue, and keep them away from the low road of heartache. I shall help them to keep their youth beautiful that all their days may be joyful.

Salome. So great is thy task that I would share it with thee for it leads to all womankind. But for the goodness of God and a sheltered home I might have been as thou wert when the Master found thee.

Mary Magdalene. Salome, thy heart is of gold and thine understanding like the Master's. (*Group of young women and girls pass by. Happy, laughing, pretty girls in light costumes and bearing garlands of flowers. Singing, off-stage, "Just as I am, Thine Own to be, Friend of the Young, Who Lovest me," No. 131, Hymnal for American Youth.)*

Martha. I see homes in which the Master is an honored guest. Mothers and fathers who teach their children the words spoken by our beloved leader, Jesus. (*Men and women in couples pass. Singing, off-stage, "When Morning Gilds the Skies."*)

Mary. I see the children coming down through

TRIUMPHANT GLADNESS

the years. They will hear his words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." (*The kindergarten and primary children pass by. Singing, off-stage, "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus I love to Hear." No. 94 in Hymnal for American Youth.*)

Peter. (*Rises approaches C. front.*) And so his work shall continue until all the world shall know him and the power of his resurrection. (*The Angel of the Resurrection enters holding white cross. Takes her position C.*)

Angel. Long ago the Master said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." On the cross he was lifted up, but now hath he ascended on high and is alive forevermore. (*Chorus, off-stage, sings, "Jesus Christ is Risen Today," found in church hymnals. Peter takes place at right of angel, Mary Magdalene next to Peter, and Salome beyond her. On angel's right, Lazarus stands, next him Mary, and beyond Mary, Martha. The children enter and take places across platform back of the disciples, following them come the young women, the young men, the fathers, mothers, and teachers. Last the chorus enters. The chorus sings while the others are forming on stage. When the chorus is on the stage all join in the singing of the Alleluia until hymn is ended.*)

(CURTAIN)

Note. In case there is no curtain the groups on stage may march off the platform and down aisle, to seats in audience. The organist playing appropriate music until all are seated.

THE MESSAGE OF EASTER

Characters

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA.

SALOME.

MARY.

MARY MAGDALENE.

TWO HIGH PRIESTS.

TWO ROMAN SOLDIERS.

ANGEL.

Costumes

See Costumes under Triumphant Gladness,

SCENE I

Time: The evening of the crucifixion.

Place: The garden of Joseph of Arimathea.

The platform should be arranged to represent a garden. This may be easily done by using branches, flowers, potted palms, and ferns. Screens may be covered with chicken wire and the meshes filled with vines, leaves, and flowers. The screens should be placed at the rear in such position as to suggest an *entrance* into a tomb. (Do not have a tomb on the stage.) The entrance should be at one side, rear, and

THE MESSAGE OF EASTER

near to a stage exit. A stone from the tomb may be fashioned of heavy building paper or wall paper of dark solid color, gray, or brown. Kalsomine mixed with water may be brushed lightly across the stone giving it a more realistic appearance. Back of the tomb, but higher and toward the center stands a white cross. The platform and church should be darkened while organ plays "The Darkness" from Gounod's Redemption or some other appropriate music. As the music nears its close the darkness on the platform is somewhat lightened, showing Joseph standing near the tomb and gazing at it. Softly, from off-stage, comes the sound of voices singing "The Strife is O'er," found in most hymnals. Omit the Hallelujahs at the beginning. During the singing red lights play across the stage, with occasional bright lights on the cross. At the close of the hymn the lighting of the stage should be deep blue for evening.

The women come slowly down aisle from rear of room. Their shoulders are bowed, their eyes are on the ground, their attitude expresses overwhelming grief. Not a word is spoken. Just before they reach the platform Joseph moves quietly over into shadows, L. Light thrown on cross for just a second. Women approach tomb, kneel before it. Down the aisle now come the chief priests and two soldiers. As they near the platform, one of the women lifts her head, listens, turns, sees the men. For a second only she looks, then touches the others, who look. Quickly and fearfully they rise and steal back into the shadows beside Joseph. This will make a most effective bit of illustrative action if carefully done. Joseph puts him-

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self just in front of them in a protecting attitude. The soldiers step into background while the priests seal the tomb. As it is finished the first priest steps back and looks at it.

First Priest. It is sealed. Now it will not be possible for his disciples to steal him away.

Second Priest. Thou speaketh well. I, too, feared lest they should come by night and take his body and then tell the people that he had risen, as he said.

First Priest. After three days I will rise again, was his boast. It were well that Pilate gave us a watch for we must have no more trouble over this man.

Second Priest. All Jerusalem hath been disturbed because of him.

First Priest. Not only Jerusalem but the cities round about, on both sides of the Jordan.

Second Priest. Many of their people saw the crucifixion, for they were here for the Passover. They know he is no more. They will soon forget him.

First Priest. Would that thou speakest truly!

Second Priest. What meanest thou?

First Priest. I fear that this man (*pointing toward tomb*) will not be easily forgotten. The manner of his death (*light flashes on and off cross*), his cries, the darkness, the earthquake, will cause many to remember him but there is yet another reason.

Second Priest. The temple?

First Priest. Aye, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top even unto the bottom. All who would, might look within upon sights heretofore seen only by the high priests.

THE MESSAGE OF EASTER

Second Priest (cautiously). Dost thou think he was a Prophet?

First Priest. (Startled, then indignant.) A prophet! Nay! Thou art mad to speak so. All of these strange things happened to occur at this time, but many of the people will connect them with the death of this man Jesus. But (*changes his tone to a more determined one*) we are rid of him now. He is dead and the tomb is sealed. Jerusalem is free of his blasphemy at last. (*Light flashes on cross for a moment, accompanied by a sound like thunder.*) Let us return, it groweth late. I fear the storm is returning. (*To soldiers*) Guard well this place. See that it be not molested by any one. (*The priests go down the aisle. The soldiers take their places near to and on opposite sides of the tomb. After the priests are out of sight the women steal cautiously out of the garden, moving along its edge, keeping as far away from the soldiers as possible, and pass down the aisle. Joseph leaves stage through exit and not by aisle.*)

(CURTAIN)

SCENE II

Time: Early on the morning of the Resurrection.

Scene: Same as Scene I with the exception of the position of the stone. It is now placed against the side or on the floor. The stage is still quite dark. First soldier stands near tomb, the other paces back and forth across stage.

Second Soldier. I like not this watch.

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First Soldier. Nor I. The events of these last two days hath made us unfit for night duty. Wast thou at the crucifixion?

Second Soldier. Aye, and never shall I forget it. Such strange happenings did I never see before.

First Soldier. I passed near to him just before they reached the hill. His eyes—I see them yet. (*Looks about him. Beckons to other. In a whisper.*) He was a good man.

Second Soldier. He must have been one of their prophets. Didst ever thou see such blackness as covered the land?

First Soldier. Nay, it was strange.

Second Soldier. Didst hear his cry?

First Soldier. Aye, and I saw the earth open and (*in awed tones*) the dead come forth from their graves.

Second Soldier. I believe he was the Son of God.

First Soldier. (*Lifts eyes to heaven.*) The Son of God! I wonder! Could he be?

Second Soldier. He was unlike any other man. I wish I might have known him while he lived. I believe he was a god. (*The darkness is lightened a little. Women come slowly down aisle.*)

First Soldier. Look! Yonder come women.

Second Soldier. (*Looks toward aisle.*) Let them come. They can do no harm.

First Soldier. They may have known him. (*Women approach platform. Salome and Mary walk side by side. Mary Magdalene alone, behind them.*)

Salome (*turning to Mary*). Didst thou forget the seal? How can we anoint the body of our Lord?

THE MESSAGE OF EASTER

Mary. It may be the soldiers will roll away the stone for us.

Salome. They would not dare break the seal. (*To Mary Magdalene.*) What shall we do? The tomb is sealed. We cannot enter. (*Until she is spoken to Mary Magdalene has not appeared to be listening. Now she looks at Salome.*)

Mary Magdalene (wearily). Yea, it is sealed. The priests have taken him from us indeed.

Mary. What shall we do?

Mary Magdalene. Let us go on. I would see where he is laid. (*Women start to advance. At same time angel comes onto platform from entrance near tomb and stands in front of it. White light floods the platform. The soldiers fall to the ground in terror. The women cover their faces with their arms and huddle together in fear.*)

Angel. Fear not: for I know ye seek Jesus who was crucified. (*Women relax, lift heads as if listening.*) He is not here. He is risen as he said. (*Women drop arms, turn toward angel.*)

Salome (in surprise). Risen!

Angel. Risen as he said. Come see the place where he lay. (*Hesitatingly the women advance to the tomb. A bright light shines from within the tomb.*)

Mary. He is not here.

Angel. He is risen.

Mary (slowly, doubtfully). He is risen.

Salome (quickly). Oh, dost thou not remember that he said, After three days I will rise again? This is the third day. He is risen as he said.

Mary. He is risen.

Mary Magdalene. He is risen, indeed! (*She then*

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sings with all the joy and power possible. "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth." During singing soldiers lift heads and listen.)

Angel (at close of song). He liveth again even as he said. Go and tell his disciples that he is risen.

Salome. Aye, they must know!

Mary. Let us hasten and tell the good news.

Angel (to Mary Magdalene). Go, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

Mary Magdalene (quickly). Peter must be told. Come. (*Moves quickly off platform and down aisle with other women following, their faces aglow with joy. The angel departs by exit near tomb, the bright light fades. The soldiers struggle slowly to their feet.*)

First Soldier. Didst thou see and hear?

Second Soldier. Aye, she said he had risen. (*Goes to tomb and looks in.*)

First Soldier. Strange, strange. (*Second soldier joins him, looks in.*)

Second Soldier. He was the Son of God.

First Soldier. I will stay here no longer. Let us begone!

Second Soldier. Aye, if the priests should come they would blame us.

First Soldier. We will return to the city and report, then . . .

Second Soldier. Then what?

First Soldier (in whisper). Let us go into Galilee.

Second Soldier. (*Looks at him inquiringly.*) Thou wouldst see Jesus?

First Soldier. Aye, and thou?

THE MESSAGE OF EASTER

Second Soldier. Aye, for surely he is risen.

First Soldier. And is alive again. Let us find him. (*Men leave stage and hurry down aisle and out of room.*)

(CURTAIN)

SCENE III

Same as Scene I.

A piece of wire mesh has been placed over the entrance to the tomb. This will not be noticed by the audience. The Sunday School members enter at rear of auditorium and march down the aisle to the platform. The organist plays "Jesus Christ is Risen Today." The Intermediate and Junior girls carry Easter lilies which they insert in the mesh, and place about the tomb. The result will be a bank of flowers with no suggestion of a tomb. The other children carry flowers and sprays of green which they place at the foot of the cross.

When the children reach the platform the adult chorus, off-stage, sings, "Jesus Christ is Risen Today," and continues singing until the children have placed their flowers. Children then face the audience and sing the Alleluias of the hymn. When last stanza has been sung children march off platform and to their seats. Organist continues playing the hymn until all are seated.

THE ADVANCING KINGDOM

A Service for Decision Day

Characters

VISION, a young woman.

QUESTIONER, a young man.

ABRAHAM.

ANGEL.

JESSE.

SAMUEL.

SEVEN SONS OF JESSE.

DAVID.

THE DISCIPLES.

MARTIN LUTHER.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

CHRISTIANITY, a young woman.

Church members, men, women, young people.

Service group, members of Senior and Young People
Departments.

Intermediate and Junior members.

Primary and Kindergarten children.

Arrangement of the Platform

As this service will, in most cases, be used during the Sunday School hour, the production calls for very

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little in the nature of setting. Draperies at the back and sides will form an acceptable background. It is not necessary to have a drop curtain for the platform. The table and chair should be in place near front, L. and Vision may enter slowly and take her seat and begin to write. After a few moments the Questioner enters, R. It is necessary to have a curtain back of Vision's table to be drawn for the "pictures." It may be a temporary curtain made of any suitable material and so arranged that it may easily be drawn. After Christianity appears the curtain is left open as all the space will be needed for the groups. In the biblical scenes the ancient form of address should be used, but not in the other parts.

Costumes

Vision. Loose flowing robe of blue, bands of silver about her hair.

Questioner. Simple Hebrew dress. See Pilgrims under Costumes in "The First Christmas."

Angel. Loose white robe, halo.

Jesse and Sons. Hebrew dress.

Samuel. Tunic of white, over which he wears a mantle of rich color, an oblong scarf may be draped over the head and allowed to fall over the shoulders, sandals.

David. Short, straight costume of dark material, tied by cord at waist.

Martin Luther. Garb of monk.

Abraham Lincoln. See picture.

Christianity. In long white robe with long pointed

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sleeves, no shoes, a band of gold about her hair.
In her hand she carries a small white cross.
Church members and Sunday School members. Ordinary American clothes.

Properties

Table. About 5 by 3 feet.

Parchment. Large piece of paper.

Quill Pen. One can be made from a long feather.

Tent. A piece of khaki or dark canvas arranged to represent a tent.

Home of Jesse. Add a rug or skins to Abraham's tent, enough to change the appearance.

Small Desk and Paper. For Martin Luther.

Crosses. Made of thin boards or heavy cardboard, about twenty-four inches high. They should be so thin that Christianity may easily hold the five in her hand. She holds them one against the other so as to give the effect of one cross only. As she gives each away the appearance will be as if she were giving the shadow of her own cross. This must be done with great care.

Time: Present.

Scene: In the Realm of Vision (Indoor or Outdoor Scene).

Enter Vision. She walks slowly to table, takes seat and begins to write. After a few moments the Questioner enters and slowly approaches Vision.

Questioner. What are you writing, O Vision?

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Vision. I write the signs by which men have advanced the Kingdom of God.

Questioner. Sometimes I think it is not advancing.

Vision. That is because you are not able to see clearly, or to interpret that which you do see.

Questioner. Do you believe that His kingdom is still advancing?

Vision. I know it is.

Questioner. Why have there been long periods of time when so little advancement was made?

Vision. It is only when men make decisions that they advance. Not always has the world had men of strength and might who dared to make decisions and stand by them.

Questioner. Few can do that. The kingdom suffers for want of leaders. Men of decision are few.

Vision. Yet have there been many such. Men who have made and held to their decisions.

Questioner. Moses and Elijah and Paul. I think of few others, now.

Vision. Your memory is poor. There have been legions of such men. Let me tell you of a few. (*Curtain drawn shows Abraham sitting in front of his tent. An angel appears.*)

Angel. Blessed art thou, Abraham, for the Lord Jehovah is with thee.

Abraham. (*Bows low to the earth, then raises his head.*) What is the will of Jehovah concerning his servant?

Angel. This is his word to thee: Get thee out of this country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land that I will show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation. I will make thy

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name great and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Abraham. (Rises.) This is the land of my fathers and here have I lived. I know no other. (*Gazes into distance for a moment, then turns to angel.*) But Jehovah is my light and my salvation. His voice will I obey. Whither shall I go?

Angel. Take thy wife and thy servants and thy flocks and journey even unto Canaan and there it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.

Abraham. It shall be as thou sayest. (*Curtain.*)

Vision. Abraham went forth not knowing where he was going. But he trusted Jehovah and dared to do his bidding.

Questioner. Yea, he did make a decision.

Vision. And Jehovah made him the father of a great nation.

Questioner. I had not thought of Abraham's early days, nor of the strength of character he showed. Surely he did advance the kingdom!

Vision. We will not speak of Moses for you have already done so, nor of Elijah, nor of the many prophets. One king I will show you. (*Curtain drawn, shows Jesse and two sons at their home. Enter Samuel.*)

Samuel. The Lord be with thee, Jesse.

Jesse (anxiously). Comest thou peaceable, Samuel?

Samuel. Peaceable. Jehovah hath sent me to anoint one of thy sons to be king over Israel.

Jesse (amazed). One of my sons to be king over Israel!

Samuel. Even so. Send for them to come to me.

Jesse. It will be the eldest because he is also the

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tallest and he is already here. (*Indicates Eliab. Samuel looks at him for a long moment.*)

Samuel. It is not he. Jehovah looketh not on the outward appearance but on the heart. (*Eliab leaves stage.*)

Jesse. This is my second son. He is mighty with the sword. It will be he. (*Abinadab advances to Samuel.*)

Samuel. Neither hath Jehovah chosen this one. Send for thy other sons.

Jesse. Eliab hath gone for them. (*Enter sons.*) They are here.

Samuel. Cause each to pass before me and I will tell thee which is the chosen one. (*Five sons pass by. Samuel looks at each and shakes his head. When none have been chosen Eliab and Abinadab also pass by again but Samuel shakes his head.*)

Samuel. Are these all thy sons?

Jesse. There is the youngest who is with the sheep but he is only a boy.

Samuel. Send and fetch him. (*Enter servant with hand on arm of David. Servant prostrates himself before Jesse.*)

Servant. Thy servant did hear the words of the prophet when he entered, and lo, I ran, that I might bring thee, David, thy youngest son. (*Turns and kneels before prophet.*) See, (*points to David*) he is of a beautiful countenance and good to look upon and his heart is pure.

Samuel. Come to me, lad. (*David approaches, kneels before Samuel, who gives him a searching look, smiles, looks at Jesse.*) This is he. (*Samuel anoints David.*)

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Jesse. (*Takes David by the hand and assists him to rise.*) David, my son! Jehovah hath chosen thee to be king over Israel. No more shalt thou tend the sheep. Thou shalt go with thy brothers to the army and to the city, that thou mayest be near to King Saul where thou canst learn the things becoming a king.

David. (*Looks quickly at father, hesitates, then straightens himself up to his full height.*) Nay, father, I would return to the sheep and the hills, that I may learn from Jehovah the things he would teach me. I would grow strong in his out-of-doors. I would be away from the crowds, where I may learn to think for myself.

Samuel. He speaketh well. Let him return to the sheep.

Jesse. Go, if it pleaseth thee. (*David goes out.*) He has ever been different from his brothers. (*Curtain.*)

Questioner. Who knows . . . had he not returned to the hills perhaps he would never have given us those beautiful songs. (*Repeats twenty-third Psalm.*) Surely his was a great decision!

Vision. Now I bid you to think of the days when the Master trod the earth. Of the men whom he called and the courageous ones who decided to follow him.

Questioner. His disciples!

Vision. Yes. (*Curtain drawn. As the name is called the man crosses the platform.*) Peter and Andrew, James and John, Matthew, Thomas, Nathaniel, Philip, Bartholomew, James, Thaddacus, Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea. (*Curtain.*)

Questioner. 'Again I had forgotten that it was their

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first decisions to follow the Master that made it possible for them to do the great things later.

Vision. Now I will tell you of other disciples, but of a later day. (*Curtain drawn shows Martin Luther sitting at a table writing. After a moment he lifts his head as if in thought.*)

Vision. Behold the Father of Protestantism.

Questioner. Martin Luther! Yes, his decision to nail the paper to the door of the church took courage.

Vision. And when he faced the world at Worms.

Questioner. Surely he has helped to advance the Kingdom of God. (*Curtain.*)

Vision. Listen. (*Chorus, off-stage, sings "A Mighty Fortress is Our God."*)

Vision. Dost thou know who wrote it?

Questioner. Martin Luther.

Vision. So it is that his words abide with men even to this day. Again the years passed by and a man appeared who had to make tremendous decisions. But when he knew the right he dared to stand for it, even though he stood alone. (*Curtain, shows Abraham Lincoln standing, profile toward audience.*)

Lincoln. With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right. (*Curtain.*)

Questioner. He was a great leader and the world is a better place because he lived. All of these men made important decisions, I admit, but what of the people of today? What are they doing?

Vision. You shall see. (*Curtain is drawn revealing the Spirit of Christianity.*) Christianity will show you many who are in her service and who are working for the advancement of the kingdom. Look!

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(Onto stage come men and women, young people and youths, a goodly number.)

Questioner. Who are these?

Vision. They represent those who are in the churches today. Listen.

Christianity. Followers of Christ, why do you seek me?

Leader. That we may renew our vows and pledge ourselves again to your service.

Christianity. What will you do this coming year to aid me in my work?

Leader. We pledge ourselves to more regular attendance upon divine service, to serve our God and our brothers more faithfully than before.

Christianity. If you do this the Kingdom of God shall indeed advance. Onward march, the way lies before. *(She gives a cross to the leader who holds it aloft and leads the others off the stage, all singing "Lead On, O King Eternal," found in many hymnals. A group of singers stand just outside entrance and sing until all are off-stage.)*

Vision. Look again and see the saviours of the world. *(Enter group of men and women, not many, led by Spirit of Service.)*

Spirit of Service. Oh, Christianity, I bring to you these young men and maidens who have heard the Master's words. Truly the harvest is great but the laborers are few. These *(indicates the group)* have decided upon a life of service, some go to the uttermost parts of the earth, others to the poor and unfortunate in the homeland, others to teach little children, but all are workers in the vineyard of the Master.

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Christianity. I have need of every one of them. (*Gives cross to Spirit of Service.*) Go, your tasks await you. (*Group leaves stage, singing "O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee."*)

Questioner. I see. These have decided to carry on the work but are they equal to the task? Can they finish it?

Vision. No, they will not complete it, but they will do their part. I will show you who will follow them. (*Curtain drawn. Junior and Intermediate boys and girls approach Christianity.*)

Spirit of Youth. Is there any place for us, Christianity? We are not old enough to teach or to work but we would give service, too.

Christianity. Of course there is a place for you! I need you as much as I need the others. It is for you to decide now what you will do with your lives. Will you, too, follow the way the Master leads?

Group. We will.

Christianity. Then decide today to enlist under his banner. Study to show yourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed. Store his words in your memory.

Spirit of Youth. But how can we serve him?

Christianity. Remember that he said, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." In your home, in your school, in your Church School, and in your play, be governed by love and the spirit of happiness, and you will be preparing yourself for greater service when you are older. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.

Group. We will. (*Christianity gives leader a cross.*)

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She holds aloft the cross, and group leaves stage singing "Onward Christian Soldiers.")

Questioner. So the boys and girls, even are being prepared for service?

Vision. Yes, for you know the words, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Questioner. So these are the future workers?

Vision. But not all. One more picture I would show you. (*Group of Primary and Kindergarten children run onto stage and surround Christianity.*)

Children's Leader. We, too, love the Saviour and belong to him.

Christianity. Of course you do. What did he say about little children?

Children. Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Christianity. And will you try to learn other words he said?

Children. Yes.

Christianity. And will you come regularly to Sunday School and learn his songs?

Children. Yes.

Christianity. Shall we sing one of them now?

Children. Oh, yes. (*All sing "There is no Name So Sweet on Earth," No. 409, Hymns for the Living Age. If preferred, the children may sing a hymn they already know.*)

Christianity. (*Gives cross to leader.*) Go on and join the many others who have decided to follow the Christ. (*Children leave stage.*)

Christianity. (*Exalted, holds cross aloft.*) As

long as the children and youth shall decide to follow the Master and to carry on his work, his kingdom will continue to come on earth and his will be done. (*Christianity leaves platform.*)

Vision. Do you understand now why I believe decisions are still being made? Year after year the youth of the world see the need, and hear the call to service. Some listen, but the work seems too hard and they pass it by. Others hear. They know the task is difficult but it challenges all their powers. They face it squarely and make their decisions. And so the work goes on, and we who listen hear the chorus come swelling through the ages. Listen and you, too, shall hear. (*Chorus off-stage begins to sing "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations," No. 427 in Hymns of the Living Age. All who have passed, return—Abraham, David, the disciples, Martin Luther, Lincoln, the Church, the Youth, the Boys and Girls, the Little Children; Vision and the Questioner follow. In this order they pass down one aisle and return up another, crosses held up, and take seats at the front or pass out of the room as desired.*)

MOTHERS' GIFTS

A Pageant for Mothers' Day

Characters

MABEL, Girl of fourteen.

HELEN, Girl of thirteen.

Other girls same age.

HENRY

MR. STRONG

MR. ELLIS

MR. WHITE

} Men.

MRS. SMITH

MRS. GREEN

MRS. BLACK

MRS. WHITE

} Mothers of today.

MRS. LANE

MRS. LONG

MRS. CROSS

} Mothers of yesterday.

MARY, the Madonna.

READER, a young woman.

Group of children.

Costumes

Girls. Present day dresses.

Men. Present day clothes.

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Mothers of Today. Present day dresses, light and pretty.

Mothers of Yesterday. Gray hair, dark dresses, not too old fashioned, but such as women wore fifty years ago. They should be well dressed, and not so as to produce mirth.

Mary. See description under "The First Christmas."

Reader. Light dress.

Group of Children. Ordinary clothes.

Properties

The heart used at the end of the pageant should be made of coarse wire mesh, in a frame of wood, about one and one-half feet high. Both wire and wood should be painted white.

Time: Present.

Scene: Any room.

Children decorating the place with garlands of flowers, branches, and baskets of flowers. Enter a small group of men or older boys.

Mr. White. What are you children doing?

Mabel. We are decorating for Mothers' Day.

Mr. Brown. Mothers' Day?

Helen. The mothers are to meet here for a conference. We want the place to be beautiful for them.

Mabel. So we are decorating it for a surprise. When they see it they will know how much we love them.

Henry. All the children everywhere are doing something nice for their mothers today.

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Mr. Strong. They should. Their mothers do so much for them.

Mr. Ellis. Just as ours did for us.

Mr. White. I wish we might have had a Mothers' Day when we were young so that we could have decorated a place with flowers for our mothers.

Mr. Strong. We might do it for them even now.

Mr. Brown. How?

Mr. Strong. We could help decorate this place in memory of our mothers.

Mr. White. We could wear a flower in their honor, too, as we have done before.

Mr. Strong. Shall we?

Men. Yes.

Mabel. Bring more flowers and we will make the place beautiful for your mothers and for our mothers. (*Men leave stage. Organ plays softly "Mother Machree." Children continue to decorate. After a moment or two the men return, each wearing a white carnation, and laden with flowers and greens. The men and the children place the flowers. The organ continues to play until the work is finished.*)

Mabel. There, I think it is done.

Helen. Doesn't it look lovely?

Men. Yes.

Mr. Brown. Nothing could ever be lovely enough for our mothers.

Mr. White. We never know until we are grown how much our mothers did for us.

"God made a love that wrapped our infancy
And blessed us, even when we knew it not—

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A love that knew no barrier, no self;
A love that never faltered or forgot.

This was God's gift, immortal, changeless, vast,
Whose name he wrote, because he knew no other
Name sweeter, on our waking consciousness,
In golden characters. That name was "Mother."

Mr. Smith. That reminds me of a song I heard
Mr. White singing Sunday. Won't you sing that
Mother song again?

Mr. White. It was my mother's birthday and I
sang it for her. (*Sings "Mother O' Mine."*)

Helen. We must not stay longer. Our mothers
will soon be here and they must not see us. We want
them to be surprised.

Mr. Smith. Helen is right. Let us be going. (*All
leave stage. The organ plays softly "Mother O' Mine"
until all are off stage. Enter group of mothers of
today, attractive in appearance. They should vary in
age from twenty-five to forty.*)

Mrs. Smith. Oh, look!

Mrs. Green. Isn't it lovely?

Mrs. Black. Who could have done it?

Mrs. Smith. I saw the children with their arms
filled with flowers, passing our house this afternoon.

Mrs. Green. Do you think they did it for us?

Mrs. Smith. They knew we were coming here.

Mrs. Green. Wasn't it dear of them to think of
it and to do it for us?

Mrs. Black. They are dears, every one.

All. They are. (*Women seat themselves about the
platform.*)

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Mrs. Smith. They are dear, these children of ours, yet they trouble me. They do so many things I never did when I was a child.

Mrs. Green. They say such startling things.

Mrs. White. Mine call me old-fashioned, and laugh at some of the things I tell them.

Mrs. Green. So do mine.

Mrs. Smith. I wonder if we were a problem to our mothers?

Mrs. Green. Oh, no. We had to *mind*. We did just as they told us.

Mrs. Black. I wonder if we did.

Mrs. Smith. Let's send for our mothers and ask them.

Mrs. White. I will go for them. (*Leaves stage.*)

Mrs. Green. Dear mothers! How much they did for us! How often I think of my mother now that I am away from her in my own home. (*Organ plays softly, "Mother Machree."* After a few bars *Mrs. White and the mothers of yesterday enter. Women are bareheaded. Each has a piece of sewing or knitting in her hand. The younger women rise and greet them and help them to be seated. The organist continues to play until all are seated.*)

Mrs. White. I found them easily. Each one was at home, sitting by the fireplace, with her work in her hands. (*Younger women laugh.*)

Mrs. Lane. Why shouldn't we be? Is not our place in the home?

Mrs. White. Yes, I suppose so. I always knew where to find you, didn't I? You were always at home.

Mrs. Lane. Well, not always. I went to church

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on the Sabbath. Sometimes of an evening I went with your father to call on friends.

Mrs. Green. Did you not belong to a club?

Mrs. Lane. A club? Oh, yes, I belonged to the Ladies' Aid.

Mrs. Long. I belonged to the Eastern Star.

Mrs. Cross. One winter I belonged to a reading club. We read Browning.

Mrs. White. What did you do afternoons and evenings?

Mrs. Lane. In the afternoon we did our sewing. I had four children and some of them were always in need of clothes.

Mrs. Black. Why didn't you buy them ready-made at the stores?

Mrs. Lane. Why, child! (*Mrs. Long and Mrs. Cross laugh.*)

Mrs. Long. What would the neighbors have thought of us?

Mrs. Cross. I made all of my children's clothes; even the suits for the boys until they were thirteen.

Mrs. White. What did you do in the evenings? You had no picture shows as we do.

Mrs. Lane. There were no picture shows, as you say, but we did not miss them. There were some good plays, though, and once in a while we went to one.

Mrs. Cross. Our evenings were wonderful! They were the best part of the day.

Mrs. Green. What did you do if you had no clubs or shows?

Mrs. Lane. We had parties quite often, when all the neighbors met at some one's home.

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Mrs. Long. Such good times as we had—playing games, singing, and talking.

Mrs. Lane. You must remember that we did not live in a big city as you do.

Mrs. Cross. Neither did we have the automobile. It took us longer to drive three miles behind old Dobbin than it takes you to go thirty in your Cadillac. (*Laughs.*) There was not as much time for pleasure then as there is now.

Younger Mothers. Time!

Mrs. Green. Why, there isn't time enough for anything today!

Mrs. White. It is time that makes our problem so difficult. My children have practically all of their time to themselves, yet they never have time enough to do the things I wish them to do.

Mrs. Green. They have too much time for pleasure. They go out evening after evening and stay late. Somehow they never seem to think it is time to come home.

Mrs. Long. Yes, it was late sometimes when we got home—nearly midnight.

Mrs. Black. But midnight isn't late any more. They go so far in their autos. They meet persons I never even see. They do and say things I never even thought of when I was young. I am worried.

Mrs. Lane. Mothers always have worried. Time moves on and each generation has new ideas, new pleasures, and new ways of expressing itself, to which it is difficult for us who are older to adjust ourselves.

Mrs. White. How can we know what to do? (*Enters Understanding.*)

MOTHERS' GIFTS

Understanding. I heard you talk and I beg you give me to your boys and girls!

Mrs. White. I do not know you. Who are you?

Understanding. I am the friend your boys and girls, your sons and daughters, crave. They reach out for me. They call me, but I cannot go to them unless you, too, call me.

Mrs. Green. Your name?

Understanding. Just a simple one. My name is *Understanding*.

Mothers. *Understanding*?

Understanding. Yes, you do not know me well. Your children say so. Without my help you cannot see them as they really are. It is true they have new ways of talking, new ideas, new pleasures. But they are not indifferent to your love and thought. If only you would give to them *Understanding*, you and they might both be happier.

Mrs. Smith. How could we?

Understanding. When in doubt, when worried, if you would call me I could help you. If, before you criticise or censure you would let *Understanding* show you the truth through her clear illumination, you would save yourselves and your children many heart-aches for I would make all clear for you. (*Bright white light turned on Understanding.*) In this light could you see truly.

Mrs. White. Gladly would we have your help. Leave us not, for we would cultivate your acquaintance. (*Understanding steps back but remains on stage.*)

Mrs. Lane. Here comes another whom I recognize, *Truth*.

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Mrs. Green. Truth? Why we know you, why should you come to us?

Truth. Never did children need me more than to-day. There is so much insincerity among men: so many false standards, so much that is untrue and deceiving. The youth today need to see with crystal clearness. They need to know Truth which alone can make them free.

Mrs. Smith. I wonder. Do we always meet the test of Truth?

Truth. I know what you mean. Sometimes to help your children, or to shield them from unpleasantness, you are tempted to leave me or to pass me by.

Mrs. Smith. I see. Sometimes we do slight you. But we would give you to our children. We want you for their friend. Stay with us. (*Truth steps to rear of stage. Enter Time.*)

Time. I am another gift your children need. I am Time.

Mrs. Smith. Time! Oh, I am glad to see you. The children always say they have no time for things I want them to do.

Time. There is Time enough if it is rightly divided. You must help to arrange for Time in which your children may work at helpful tasks and think them through to results. The task itself is not as important as the controlled attention which will result.

Mrs. Smith. I know my children need you. For they do not long remain interested in anything. They pass from one thing to another. They take no time to think for themselves.

Time. Because of that, yours is the responsibility to provide the tasks and to help your children to find

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the time to devote to them. (*Takes place near Truth.*)

Mrs. Lane. Look who comes yonder. I know her, though her garb is somewhat different than when I saw her first. She is Early Training.

Early Training. Yes, I go to every mother. I must be given to your children early or I cannot be theirs at all. The things the children learn in their first five years influence their entire life.

Mrs. Green. But they are scarcely more than babies at five!

Early Training. Even so, by that time certain habits and impressions are so firmly fixed that the school and church can do little to change them.

Mrs. Green. I had thought I could just enjoy my children during their early years and then begin to train them when they started in school.

Early Training. Too late then. You must give me to them from their very first day if you would have the kind of children you desire. (*Takes place at rear.*)

Mrs. White. I never realized before how much we have to give our children. I have thought too much of the things that trouble me, and not enough of their remedies.

Mrs. Green. I never realized before how great is my responsibility.

Mrs. Smith. I thought if I loved them enough everything would somehow come out all right.

Mrs. Green. I thought I was helpless against this modern age. But I feel so no longer. I shall read and study and talk with other mothers. I am not going to fail in my task. (*Enter Mary.*)

Mrs. Green. (*Sees Mary, is amazed. In voice of awe.*) Mary!

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Mrs. Smith. The Madonna!

Mrs. White. The mother of Jesus!

Mary. (*Approaches the group.*) I, too, had to come. Surely I belong with the mothers of the world for was not I a mother? Did I not give to the world a Son whose name is known to all men?

Mrs. White (*softly*). Jesus!

Mary. My first born son he was. I, too, was young and ignorant. I knew not what I should teach him, or how best to care for him. I was oft times troubled. As he grew older he did and said things I could not understand. Our neighbors and the people of the town criticised him and persecuted him until my mother's heart well-nigh broke. I pondered all these things in my heart but could find no explanation. I was so helpless.

Mrs. Green. As we are?

Mary. Even as you. That is why I came to you now. I know your worries, your desires for your children, and I understand your heartaches and your longings. So I come to bring you my gift. Give to your children the gift my Son gave to the world. Make him the friend of your children. Teach them the truths he made plain. Give to your children a mother's love and care, the help of your days, the friendship of my Son, and then—(*extends hand in entreaty*) give them your confidence and send them forth into a life of service! They will not fail you. Great are your responsibilities but great shall be your joy if you meet them with understanding and vision. Mothers-of-Today, I salute you. (*Mary leaves stage.*)

Mrs. Green. (*Looks at Mary until she is out of sight.*) Mary, the mother, is one of us!

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Mrs. White. Our mother-friend!

Mrs. Lane. (*Rises, as do all the mothers of yesterday.*) Like Mary, we, the mothers of yesterday, must leave you. We cannot remain with you. We gave you our love and care, and our example. But do not follow our ways too closely. New times call for new methods. Live in your own day, not in ours. We go, but our love surrounds you.

Mothers-of-Yesterday. (*Raise hands in blessing.*) Farewell. (*Leave stage. Other mothers stand, watch them from the stage, then with outstretched hands, together, say.*) Our mothers!

Mrs. Green. As they cannot remain, neither can we. The days pass by and take us with them. New duties, new demands, new joys, hurry us away. But we go not alone now. We go with gifts for our children.

Mrs. White. We go with Understanding. (*Understanding takes her place beside Mrs. White.*)

Mrs. Smith. And Truth. (*Truth, beside Mrs. Smith.*)

Mrs. Black. And Early Training. (*Early Training beside Mrs. Black.*)

Mrs. Green. And Time. (*Time takes place beside Mrs. Green.*)

Understanding. And the companionship of Christ! (*A bright white light illumines the group and shines on them until they are off stage, L. Organist plays softly as they start. When the mothers are out of sight a group of children each carrying a white carnation, rise from seats in auditorium and enter stage, R. They look toward L., and together say, "Our Mothers." A young woman in white brings forward the heart as*

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the children are approaching, and assists each to insert her flower. Each child returns to her seat when she has placed her flower. When all the flowers are in place the young woman recites:

*"God made the hills and the lowlands
The flowers to honey the bees,
Bright stars to twinkle at night-time
The birds to sing in the trees;
God gave us the rain, then the sunshine,
Crown'd the earth with a heaven of blue,
God gave the law and the prophets,
Then, Mother, God gave us you!"*

—Jackson.

Reader leaves stage. The organist continues to play softly while the children are placing the flowers and very softly while the girl is reciting.)

FRIENDS OF JESUS

A Pageant for Childrens' Day

Characters

HERALD.

FIRST GUARDIAN OF THE PAST.

SECOND GUARDIAN OF THE PAST.

JOSEPH.

SAMUEL.

DAVID.

MIRIAM.

THE CAPTIVE MAID.

GROUP OF ORIENTAL CHILDREN.

CHORUS OF LITTLE AMERICAN CHILDREN.

KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN.

PRIMARY BOYS AND GIRLS.

JUNIOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

ADULT CHOIR.

Costumes

The Herald should be dressed in a white suit knee-length, white hose, a white cape lined with gold, and a white hat adorned with gilt cord and feathers. Sateen makes a very rich looking costume. Hat is made of same material. He carries a long trumpet made of gold paper.

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The First Guardian should wear a pale green Grecian costume and the *Second Guardian* pale yellow. *Joseph's coat* should be a bright Oriental short-sleeved mantle.

Samuel. Simple costume of white, see Perry Picture, "The Boy Samuel."

David. A straight, sleeveless tunic, of dark material, tied about the waist with a cord. See picture, "David, the Shepherd Boy."

Miriam. Bright colored loose garment reaching almost to floor, tied about the waist with a girdle of striped material. A square of bright color pinned about the head. Sandals.

Captive Maid. Bright red garment with vivid girdle, black and red head dress, sandals.

Children's Chorus. American dress.

Oriental Children. Similar to Miriam.

Preparation of Stage. At extreme left front and at extreme right front stand large baskets or jardinieres, empty. Across rear of platform is stretched a fence of chicken wire about two and one half feet high. In this are two gates which should be so arranged that they may easily be pushed open. They should open toward the audience. The fence should be filled with vines, leaves, and flowers, so that the wire is completely hidden.

Music. The organist can add much to the effectiveness of the production by the selections he plays. An appropriate march should be played while the children in groups are going on and off the stage. When a single character enters or leaves the music should be very soft.

FRIENDS OF JESUS

The church choir sings the one hymn, "This is My Father's World." The choir is not on the platform. A chorus of children from behind the screen of flowers sing, "I Think When I Read That Sweet Story of Old." The Primary Department sings a hymn and the assembled groups sing.

The children should be thoroughly familiar with these hymns. It is a good plan to have them sung in the department on several Sundays preceding Children's Day so that the children will be accustomed to singing them.

Time: Present.

Place: A Garden.

One Scene Only.

Enter Herald, left, approaches center, sounds call.

Enter two Guardians of the Past.

First Guardian. Did you call us?

Herald. Are you the guardians of the past?

First Guardian. We are.

Herald. Then you are the ones I called.

First Guardian. To what purpose?

Herald. To ask you to permit some of the children of the long ago to return for awhile this day.

Second Guardian. Why today?

Herald. Because this is Children's day. All over this country groups of children are gathered in the churches to offer their praise to God. I wish there might mingle with them some of the boys and girls of the Bible times. Is it not possible for them to return?

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First Guardian. Why yes. Time is but a piece of eternity fenced off, and today is separated from yesterday by only a thin partition. Into the world of memory they have gone, the children of the past. But they are not far away. They are just over the wall, and through the gateway of imagination they can come to play with the children of today.

Second Guardian. Many of today's children know these boys and girls of yesterday, and often they visit with them. They come on Sunday when the children gather in the class room, and hear from the lips of their teacher the stories of the Bible time; they come when, at eventide, mother tells the stories told her years ago by her mother; they come when, older grown, the boys and girls read the biblical narrative for themselves.

First Guardian. On this glad Children's Day it is most fitting that they should come to be with the other children who know and love the Saviour. A few of them I shall call, and ask them to come from the land of yesterday, back to us, through the gateway of imagination.

First Guardian. I shall call a boy who lived many, many years ago in the early Old Testament days—a boy who was one of twelve children. He was next to the youngest and the favorite with his father. To him his father gave many gifts. Of one the boy was especially proud. It was a coat of many colors.

Herald (with hand raised). Joseph, favored son of thy father, come to us. (*Enter Joseph through left gate, stands center.*)

Second Guardian. Jacob loved Joseph more than

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all his children, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a coat of many colors.

(Exit Joseph, left gate.)

First Guardian. Next I would bid come to us a child who served a priest in the temple of Jehovah. One night as he slept a voice called, "Samuel, Samuel." The boy thought it was the priest. Quickly he ran to the bedside of the old priest and said, "Here I am, for thou calledst me." The priest answered, "I called not, go, lie down again." The boy did as the priest said, but again the voice called, "Samuel, Samuel." Again the boy rose and went to the priest and said, "Here I am for thou calledst me." But the old priest said, "I called thee not, go, lie down." A third time the voice called and the child arose and went to the priest and said, "Here I am for surely thou didst call me." Then, the old priest answered. "I called thee not, but Jehovah may have. Go back, and if he calls again, say, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.'"

Herald. Samuel, boy of the temple, come to us. *(Enter Samuel, right gate, who kneels in position in well-known picture.)*

Second Guardian. And Jehovah called as at other times, "Samuel, Samuel." Then Samuel said, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." And Jehovah spake and told Samuel of many things that would come to pass in Israel. *(Samuel leaves right gate. Soloist stands just without left gate but in sight of audience, sings "Samuel," No. 472 in Hymns of the Centuries, A. S. Barnes & Co., New York.)*

First Guardian. I shall now bring to us one known and loved by everyone, not only by the children but by the men and women as well. He is the sweet

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singer of Israel whose songs have been loved and memorized down through the years since he first sang them.

Herald. David, the shepherd boy and sweet singer of Israel, come to us. (*Enter David.*)

Second Guardian. Now David was the youngest son of Jesse. It was his work to watch the sheep, and during the long hours when he was alone with them he made songs which he sang aloud. (*David sings "The Lord is my Shepherd."* *Exit David, left gate.*)

Second Guardian. Let us not forget that there were little girls in the long ago.

First Guardian. True; I shall call them now. First, the little sister who watched over her baby brother, Moses, while he was hidden in the reeds by the river, lest he be discovered by Pharoah's soldiers.

Herald. Miriam, sister of the baby Moses, come to us. (*Enter Miriam, right, her arms filled with reeds.*)

Second Guardian. When the mother could no longer hide her babe at home she made an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch. She put the child in it and laid it in the reeds by the river's brink. And his sister, Miriam, stood afar off to see that no harm came to him. (*Exit Miriam.*)

First Guardian. A little patriot we might well call the little girl I shall next present. For, though a captive in a strange country, she spoke so highly of her native land and the prophet who lived there that her master, a prominent captain of a foreign country, went to the prophet and besought him to heal him of a horrible disease.

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Herald. Ho, Captive Maid, join our group of children. (*Enter Maid, left.*)

Second Guardian. And the little maid of Israel said to her mistress, "Would that my lord was with the prophet that is in Samaria for he would heal him." And when the man had been healed he said, "Now, I know that there is no God in all the world but in Israel."

First Guardian. Thus, little one, did you prove your love and loyalty. (*Exit Maid, left.*) Now I shall pass over many years of history and bring to you the children of a later day, those who knew and loved our Lord when he trod this earth. For we read that Jesus called the children unto him, saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (*A group of children rise from behind the fence where they have been concealed, and stand with heads above it, facing the audience. If necessary a platform or steps should be arranged for the smaller ones. The children sing the first and second stanzas of "I Think When I Read That Sweet Story of Old." As singing ends a small group of children dressed in Oriental costumes enter. A bright light shines above and in front of them. Children pause and look up.*)

Second Guardian. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." (*Light fades. Exit group, R. gate. Singing third stanza of hymn by children behind fence. Exit chorus.*)

First Guardian. Now, as then, Jesus loves and calls the children. So the little ones come to him to-day, bearing their gifts of love and flowers. (*Organ*

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plays a march as Kindergarten children enter from front, right and left, bearing flowers, palm, or branches which they place in baskets at L. and R. front. A guardian stands at each to assist the children. Children pass through gates and off-stage. Organ plays softly while children are on stage and until they are out of sight.)

First Guardian. The children of today represent history in the making. Older grown they bring their song of praise to Jesus, the children's friend.

(Enter from audience, right and left, Primary children who sing "'Tis Children's Day", page 290 in Hymnal for American Youth. If the children already know a hymn well, it would be better to have them sing it than to memorize another. As they finish the hymn they pass in two lines through the gates and off-stage, while the organ again softly plays the hymn.)

First Guardian. Between these children and those we call youth stands a huge army of boys and girls. They not only sing praises to their king, but they are learning to honor him as the younger children are not able to. In their memories they store his words, and in their lives they follow his example. True and loyal and brave and adventurous they come, these further makers of history, our Juniors.

(To the strains of the march they enter from the audience, take places on the stage and repeat the Beatitudes. As the organ plays they pass out through the gates.)

First Guardian. As the children of the past loved and praised him, so do the children of today. United, their voices sound forth his praises, and as he listens

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surely he says again: "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

(Adult Choir, off-stage, sings "This is My Father's World." During the singing the children return through the gates to the platform and take places in following order: Children of history, center front; Kindergarten children, left and right front; Primary, back of first row; Juniors rear. After all are on stage and in position they sing "Saviour, Teach me Day by Day, Love's Sweet Lesson To Obey." An appropriate hymn which they already know may be substituted if desired.

At close of hymn children pass off stage and take seats reserved for them. The organ plays until all are seated.)

ADVENTURING IN NEW FIELDS

A Program for Rally Day

Characters

KEEPER OF THE FIELD.

SUMMER.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

AID with flowers.

AID with diploma.

AID with CRADLE ROLL children.

AID who opens gate.

HERALD.

BEGINNERS' SUPERINTENDENT.

PRIMARY SUPERINTENDENT.

JUNIOR SUPERINTENDENT.

INTERMEDIATE SUPERINTENDENT.

GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT.

PASTOR.

Costumes

Keeper of the Garden. Simple loose robe of green.

Summer. A combination of blue, yellow, green, and red drapes. A lovely costume may be made from Dennison's crepe paper. A free booklet giving directions will be sent on request to the Dennison Company.

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Religious Education. Long white robe, reaching to the floor. Collar and stoles of royal blue. No shoes.

Aid with flowers. Simple, loose robe of pink, wreath of flowers in hair.

Aid with diplomas. Simple, loose robe of pink, wreath of flowers in hair.

Aid who opens gate. Simple, loose robe of blue, wreath of flowers in hair.

Aid with Cradle Roll. Simple, loose robe of white, wreath of flowers in hair.

Herald. White suit, blue cape, hat of white with blue feathers. Carries bugle.

Others. In ordinary dress.

The platform should be arranged to represent a garden. If a drop of green is placed across the back of the platform, less living green will be required. Branches should be placed across the back of the platform against the green drop. Palms, ferns, and other potted plants may be used along sides. There should be a covering of green for the floor, either cloth or leaves. Wherever autumn foliage is available it should be used. At the center of the platform, near front, is a tall white arch with a gate about three feet high. The gate should be hung so as to swing inward. Religious Education stands back of the gate on side of hinges. The Aid who opens the gate stands at opposite side. The Aid who presents the diplomas stands on side of gate next audience, and gives the diplomas just before the children enter the gate. The flowers are given to Cradle Roll Children by Religious Education as mothers and children pass

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through. An Aid holds the basket of flowers. The Superintendents of the different departments stand in the background of the garden until called for. They should stand, not in a row, but easily, in different locations.

Time: Rally Sunday in early fall.

Place: The field of Religious Education.

One scene only. No curtain is necessary. The Keeper of the Garden enters, L., and moves about among the trees and flowers as if observing and caring for them. After a few moments have passed, Summer enters hurriedly from R., onto front platform. She looks quickly about, discovers the Keeper. Summer approaches the gate and calls to her.

Summer. O, Keeper of the Garden, is this the field of Religious Education?

Keeper of the Garden. It is. What is your errand?

Summer. I would speak with Religious Education.

Keeper of the Garden. Who are you?

Summer. I am Summer. I must see Religious Education.

Keeper of the Garden. Wait here and I will call her. (*Keeper of the Garden leaves stage. Summer gazes at garden with a half smile on her face. Enter Religious Education, L.*)

Religious Education. You asked for me?

Summer. You are Religious Education?

Religious Education. Yes. (*During conversation Religion remains on garden side of gate. Summer on the other.*)

Summer. I am Summer.

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Religious Education. Summer! I thought your reign was over and that Autumn was now on the throne.

Summer. Yes, it is so. I have returned just for an hour, for I would talk with you. After I had yielded up the throne to Autumn and was returning to my home for my long rest, I chanced to meet your Herald.

Religious Education. Yes, he is abroad in my service.

Summer. He told me that you feared that I had won the children and young people away from you.

Religious Education. So many left me as soon as you arrived.

Summer. But they will return. They did not really leave you even though you have not seen them for weeks. Let me tell you what happened. Of course they love me. (*Laughs.*) We have such wonderful times together! When they know I am near their thoughts turn to me, for I always fill their days with joy.

Religious Education. That is why they leave me.

Summer. But only for a time. Some go away with their parents. They spend long days in the country where their bodies rest and grow strong again for the long reign of Winter. For others, the only time they have an opportunity to go away from home for awhile is during my reign. But they do not forget you, Religious Education. They still love you; they are anxious to return. They are greeting your Herald with joy as he tells them of the reception you are to give them.

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Religious Education. Your words bring me joy. My work has not been wasted.

Summer. Indeed not. You will see the results when you meet the boys and girls again. One thing more (*looks wistfully at Religious Education*), I wish you would not think of me as your enemy. I, too, love the people. I bring them relief from constant toil, I bring them joy and happiness. I bring them health and vigor. I even bring them an eagerness to return to you. Can we not be friends?

Religious Education. (*Smiles.*) We must be. I shall think of you in a different way from now on.

Summer. If only you would! You may carry on your work throughout my domain. It will have to be different in kind from that you do while Winter is here. But you are free to make use of my rule in any way you wish. I can make it possible for you to have large gatherings in the out-of-doors; for your leaders to meet with other leaders, and so gain inspiration and new ideas; for your children to carry on your work, even though they meet not in their accustomed places.

Religious Education. I believe you. From now on we will work together. (*They join hands, raise them aloft over the fence and together make the pledge:*)

Summer and Religious Education. To our boys and girls!

Summer. Now I must hasten. Autumn gave me just this one hour in which to come to you. I must not overstay my leave. Farewell!

Religious Education. Farewell! I am now much happier because of your coming. (*Summer leaves*)

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stage. Religious Education remains, leaning on gate, lost in thought. The Herald enters, R.)

Herald. I have done your bidding, Religious Education.

Religious Education. With what results?

Herald. The children are eager to return to you. They are on the way. They will soon be here. Most of last year's roll is coming and with them many new ones. Shall I call them now?

Religious Education. I am ready. (*To Keeper of the Garden.*) Bring my Aids. (*Keeper of the Garden leaves and returns with the four superintendents. To Herald.*) Sound the call. (*The Herald gives the bugle call. The Mothers with the Cradle Roll children enter, R., led by an Aid.*)

Aid. These have I found, O Religious Education; children from the Cradle Roll who are now old enough to enter the first department of learning, the Beginners.

Religious Education. Happy am I to greet these little children from the Cradle Roll and the mothers who bring them.

Aid. The children will tell you what they have already learned. (*Children recite. This may be omitted if children have not done any work during the year.*)

Religious Education. Truly you are welcome. Enter through the gate to meet your leaders. (*An Aid brings a basket of flowers to Religious Education; another holds open the gate. As they pass through, Religious Education gives to each child a flower. If it is the custom of the school to give diplomas to the children, an aid should present them just before they*

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enter the gate. The flowers should, in that case, be given to the mothers. The Beginners' Superintendent meets them and escorts them across the stage and they leave L.)

Singing (off-stage). "I Think When I Read That Sweet Story of Old."

Herald. I summon another group. (Sounds call. Enter Beginners, R.) These are last year's Beginners who are now ready to advance.

Religious Education. What do they bring me? (Children repeat some passages learned, or sing one of their songs.)

Religious Education. I am pleased with what you have done. Enter through the gate, where one who will lead you on waits to receive you. (An Aid presents the diplomas as children pass through gate, where the Primary Superintendent meets them and leads them off-stage, L.)

Chorus (off-stage.) "All the Happy Children," No. 288, Hymnal for American Youth.

Herald. Yet another group I bring you. (Sounds call. Enter Primary, R.) These are the Primary children who are worthy to pass through the gate.

Religious Education. What have they learned? (Children give a demonstration of work done during the year.)

Religious Education. You have done well. Enter and meet your new guide. (The Aid presents the diplomas. Children pass through gate; Junior Superintendent meets them and escorts them off, L.)

Chorus (off-stage). "Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us," No. 162, Hymnal for American Youth.

Herald. Another group of older boys and girls I

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bring. (*Sounds call. Enter Juniors, R.*) Difficult has been their task. You shall see how well they have met it. (*Juniors give memory work or drill, according to material memorized. A Bible drill always proves interesting. Juniors sing "Faith of Our Fathers."*)

Religious Education. These are ready for greater tasks. They should learn of the mighty heroes of the past. (*To Aid*) Let them enter and meet the one who this year shall lead them into the land of biblical adventures. (*Aid presents diplomas. Children pass through gate; Intermediate Superintendent meets and escorts them off, L.*)

Chorus (off-stage). "Marching with the Heroes," No. 201, Hymnal for American Youth.

Herald. Not only boys and girls, but young people, are interested in your field, Religious Education. I bring another and older group. (*Sounds call. Intermediates and Seniors enter.*) You shall hear of their work. (*Concert work is not advisable for this group. One at a time may give a demonstration. It is not necessary for each to do so. Group sings, "I Would be True," No. 170, Hymnal for American Youth.*)

Religious Education (to group). You are the future leaders. I welcome you as my new aids, for you are old enough to accept responsibility and to assist me in my work. Enter. My aids will escort you through my field. (*Diplomas are given, group passes through gate, aids escort them off, leaving only Religious Education and Herald on the platform.*)

Religious Education. Well, indeed, have you done your work. The children are with me again. But

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where are the teachers and leaders who shall point the way?

Herald. (*Sounds call; teachers and officers appear, R.*). Behold your leaders!

Religious Education. Teachers and workers I greet you with joy. Yours is the important and glorious task of leading the young into the paths of righteousness and truth through the field of religious education. Go forward in the name of Him who said: "It is not you who have chosen me, but I who have chosen you and appointed you that you might go and be fruitful and that your fruit might remain. By this is God glorified—by your bearing abundant fruit and thus being true disciples of mine." Enter. (*As the group passes through gate Religious Education gives to each a flower. Group leaves stage, L.*)

Herald. Two other workers would I show you. First, he who guides and directs all your workers, and plans for all your children—the Superintendent! (*Enter Superintendent, R. Religious Education goes through the gate to meet him, takes him by the hand and leads him through the gate before she speaks.*)

Religious Education. You belong here with me, for already you know my field and have proven your right to be a co-worker with God and his servant, Religious Education.

Superintendent. It is my joy to be enlisted in your service, O Religious Education, and to do my part to carry on the Master's work. (*The superintendent may add anything he may wish as to the work of the school, or his plans for the future. When he finishes Religious Education speaks.*)

Religious Education. Your work is most accept-

ADVENTURING IN NEW FIELDS

able. Remain by my side for I would speak with you again. (*Superintendent takes place at side but slightly back of Religious Education.*)

Religious Education (to *Herald*). Who is the other to whom you referred?

Herald. He who leads this people as the under shepherd of Christ.

Religious Education. Bid him come, for without him this work cannot go on to its highest fulfillment.

Herald. (*Goes to side and escorts pastor onto platform, R. Religious Education advances to meet him and leads him through the gate.*)

Religious Education. You, too, belong here with me. Not only do you touch the lives of the boys and girls but of their parents. The church and its school are no longer two units as in days past. The field of Religious Education embraces both. Tell us of the future as it has been revealed to you.

(*Pastor gives a brief message.*)

Religious Education. Surely this portion of the field of Religious Education is well cared for. (*To Herald*) I would see my workers and children once again. Bid them all come to me. (*Herald sounds bugle. The organist plays "Onward Christian Soldiers" while all who have been on platform return. Religious Education stands at center of gate, with Superintendent on one side of her and Pastor on the other. Groups return in following order: Cradle Roll and Mothers, who take place on further side, R., of arch; Beginners on left; Primary back of them; Juniors back of Primary; Intermediates back of Primary; and teachers at rear. When all are on platform,*

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Religious Education motions to audience to rise. All join in singing "Onward Christian Soldiers." At close of singing Pastor pronounces benediction.)

THE PILGRIMS' THANKSGIVING

A short and simple presentation of the First Thanksgiving. It may be given at the worship service of the Sunday School, at the Young Peoples' Meeting, or as a feature of the Thanksgiving service of the church.

Any platform can easily be made to represent an out-door scene by the use of small trees, branches, grasses, and potted plants. A blue drop may suggest the sea in the distance. The scene is the same for both episodes,

Characters

THE POET.

ELDER BREWSTER.

THE CHORISTER.

A GROUP OF PILGRIMS, men, women and children.

Costumes

See pictures of the Puritans.

SCENE I.

Time: 1620.

Scene: A shore with woods.

Singing (off-stage). "O God, Beneath Thy Guid-

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ing Hand, Our Exiled Fathers Crossed the Sea." At close of the singing the curtain is drawn showing tableau of "Landing of the Pilgrims" grouped as in picture of that name by Rothermel. Strong white light should be thrown on it. The Poet enters L., goes front, and repeats first two stanzas of "The Breaking Waves Dashed High" (*in many collections of poems, found at any library*). Curtain drawn. Poet repeats remainder of poem and then leaves stage.

SCENE II

Time: Months later.

Place: Same as Scene I.

Singing (*off-stage*). "Come Ye Thankful People, Come, Raise the Song of Harvest Home." (*During the singing the Pilgrims come slowly and sedately onto stage. Women take seats on stumps and on ground. The men remain standing.*)

Elder. We are gathered here this bright fall day to give thanks to Almighty God for his goodness unto us. It is true that sorrow and fear and suffering have come among us. Yet have we much for which to give thanks. He brought us in safety to these shores. We have found food and comfort. Some that were ill have recovered. God has not forgotten us. We are pioneers in a new land. We know not what adventures, experiences, and joys await us. It may be our glory to found a new nation. The future is hidden. The past we know and the present is ours. For these our many blessings, let us return thanks. Let each head be bowed and each in silence

THE PILGRIMS' THANKSGIVING

render his own thanks to his God. (*Heads bowed in prayer, no audible prayer. After a moment the Elder says, "Amen." All heads raised.*)

Elder. Let us sing a song of Thanksgiving! Chorister, will you lead us? (*The Chorister alone has a book. He lines the hymns, and the group sings. This must be well rehearsed so as to be done smoothly.*)

Singing (by Pilgrims standing). "Now Thank We All our God, With Heart and Hand and Voice." This hymn was written about 1600, and so might have been familiar to the Pilgrims. It may be found in most church hymnals. It is No. 30 in the Methodist Hymnal.

Elder (as hymn is ended). Praise ye the Lord.

For it is good to sing praises unto our God

For it is pleasant, and praise is comely.

We have praised him with our lips. Let us now praise him by our acts. Join you with one another in feasting and thanksgiving. Return to your homes and the Lord be with you.

Pilgrims. And with you. (*Pilgrims leave stage. Chorus sings "A Mighty Fortress is our God."*)

A HIGHROAD TO HAPPINESS

A Pageant for Thanksgiving

Production

One might think from the list of characters that this pageant would be difficult of presentation. Such is not the case. There are only three parts that require much memorizing, Man, Angel and the Three Graces. Many of the characters are in tableaux and have no spoken parts. Much of the rehearsing may be done in sections, so that the entire cast will be needed only twice for a full rehearsal.

The hymns used are familiar ones, and may be found in the Hymnal for American Youth. This book is so generally used today that many churches will have it. If not, the hymns are well known, and may be found in many other books.

Characters

MAN.

THE ANGEL.

FEAR, a young woman.

DOUBT, a young woman.

WORRY, a young woman.

FAITH, same as Fear.

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HOPE, same as Doubt.
LOVE, same as Worry.
MOTHER, older woman.
FAMILY, a mother and three children.
FRIENDS, men, women.
PROSPERITY, a young woman.
EDUCATION, a young woman.
CHRISTIANITY, a young woman.
MOTHERLESS CHILDREN, boys and girls.
MEMBERS OF BROKEN HOMES, women and children.
FOREIGNERS, men, women, children.
CHORUS.
CHILDREN'S CHORUS.

Costumes

Man wears a long, loose, dark robe, but no head dress.
The Angel wears white, a long, flowing robe, a crown.
(See Christmas pageant.)
Fear, Doubt, and Worry wear brown robes over their colored dresses, also a loose hood to cover hair and partially hide face.
Faith. Orange, loose, flowing robe.
Hope. Green, loose, flowing robe.
Love. Blue, loose, flowing robe.
Prosperity. Golden costume. She carries sacks of gold cloth.
Education. College gown, carries a scroll.
Christianity. White, carries a cross.
Mother. An elderly woman with soft, white hair, black dress with fichu.
Family. Ordinary clothes.
Motherless Children. Ordinary clothes.

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Broken Homes. Ordinary clothes.

Foreigners. Whatever nations are available. If possible, use foreigners. If not, select a few conspicuous types.

Properties

The frame for the picture may be constructed of pieces of wide frame, if any is available, or it may be made of four pieces of three-inch width board, gilded.

Curtain. Any soft curtain of inconspicuous color, arranged so that it may be opened or drawn without difficulty or noise.

Cornucopia. May be made of heavy paper, gilded and decorated.

Cross. About eighteen inches tall, made of wood or cardboard and wrapped with white cloth or tissue paper.

Scroll, carried by Education, is easily made by attaching two small round sticks, about twelve inches in length, to either end of a piece of paper, then rolled.

Prosperity's bags of gold may be made of heavy sheeting and gilded. Gilt paint may be purchased at any Woolworth Store, or at a druggist.

Flowers. Of course, real ones are more beautiful, but artificial ones may be used if necessary.

Fruit. Real fruit in a basket.

Preparation of Stage

An inner curtain should be so placed that there

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is a passage leading from it off-stage, so that the tableaux may be arranged without the knowledge of the audience. A large frame makes an effective setting for the tableau, giving it the appearance of a picture. The characters stand just within the frame, and the curtain is drawn over it from the front. Care should be taken to have an appropriate back drop for the tableaux, black or dark green or gray.

The characters on the stage should take such positions as will make an effective stage picture. When two of the three graces are not speaking they should stand quietly back, but never very far from Man. The Angel, during the first part of the pageant, is opposite Man, at center front; during the latter part she should step to one side, then come again to center for the final scene. The grouping should be artistic but natural.

As the characters enter gradually for the grand finale care should be used that there is no crowding or bunching of characters. The final picture should be one to make a lasting impression on the audience.

Scene

Organ prelude—soft, melancholy music, growing very soft toward end as Man comes slowly, gropingly onto darkened stage. He is dressed in a dark robe, and his countenance expresses utter discouragement. He approaches center front, drops on knees, bows head in hands as if in agony of soul. Voice, off-stage, sings “Weary of Earth and Laden with my Sin.” Found in *Laudes Domini* and Methodist Hymnal. As solo ends bright light appears at left

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entrance. Angel advances through light to Man.

Angel. Why art thou cast down, O Man, and why art thou sorrowful?

Man. (*Lifts head and looks at angel.*) Because my soul is heavy within me and my spirit dieth.

Angel. Why art thou in this condition?

Man. God hath laid on me greater burdens than I can bear. I am crushed beneath the load.

Angel. In the days of old the people wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; They found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their souls fainted in them.

Man. Even so hath mine.

Angel. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.

Man. The way is too dark and my load too heavy.

Angel. But thy load may be lightened and thy strength increased. As thy day, so shall thy strength be.

Man. So it is said. But in my case it is not so.

Angel. Why go about with thine eyes upon the ground? Lift up thine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh thy help. (*Man lifts head and eyes.*) Stand upon thy feet and lift up thine head, for the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.

Man. (*Rises slowly.*) Aye, it is true. But how can I praise him when my heart is heavy and my burden great?

Angel. Thy burdens are needless. Who are these that hold thee down? (*More light comes gradually onto stage, revealing three figures back of man at some distance, but attached, by strands of dark ma-*

A HIGHROAD TO HAPPINESS

terial, to his shoulders. The three should take their places while the stage is in darkness, and each adjust his end of the strand after Man is in place.)

Man. They are always with me.

Angel (to first form). Who art thou?

Fear. (Advances.) I am Fear. I am his constant companion. I am with him always; at home, where in the distance he sees Want; in business, where Failure threatens; in life, where friends misjudge.

Man (turning toward Fear). Aye, he is always there. Never have I been able to escape him. (*Fear approaches Man until within about two feet.*)

Fear. He belongs to my kingdom.

Angel (to Fear). But the Spirit of the Lord can sever thy hold upon him and redeem his life from destruction. (*Fear turns his head away and steps back into his former place. To Doubt.*) Who art thou?

Doubt. (Approaches Angel, grins and speaks in a loud whisper.) I am Doubt.

Angel. Doubt?

Doubt. Yea, Doubt. Fear may go with him into his home and business, but I come to him in his religion. I make him distrust his friends, yea, even himself and his opportunities, his God.

Angel. Back! Thou art worse than Fear. (*Doubt goes back.*)

Man. Aye, that is true. I cannot sleep for his presence. Leave me!

Angel (to Doubt). Let him alone while I speak to yonder one. (*Addresses Worry.*) Who art thou?

Worry. I am Worry. Fear may trouble him and Doubt annoy him, but I am with him all the time,

when Fear and Doubt are with him and when they are absent.

Man. 'Tis true for always I worry whether the others will not return.

Worry. Originally he was equipped for life with health and strength, and a good mind. He was placed in a land of opportunity and of resources, he was offered a partnership with God. But now, look at him! (*Man cringes.*) Fear and Doubt and I have made him what he is! (*Laughs. Fear and Doubt join in. Man cringes more and slinks a few steps farther away.*)

Angel. Silence! (*To Worry*) Cease thy boasting! Back to thy place. (*Approaches Man*) Hast thou forgotten God and who it is that cares for thee? Didst thou not know that thou wast sent to earth for a purpose?

Man. (*Shakes his head.*) Not me! Once I believed it but now I do not.

Angel. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us. That we should be called the Sons of God. (*Man lifts his head and looks intently at Angel.*)

Man. I, a son of God? Once, perhaps, but not now?

Angel. Now and always. It is for man to recognize his divine partnership with God. Through the consciousness of this great truth men are everywhere realizing their ideals, and lifting others to higher levels. Why shouldst thou not do the same?

Man. (*With hands, not arms, extended, still diffident.*) Could I, even now?

Angel. If thou wilt. Only believe.

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Man. (*Drops hands, lifts face, raises chest, stands erect, face lights up.*) I believe.

Angel. Then thou art free. In place of these evil creatures, Fear, Doubt, Worry, who would drag thee down and prevent thee from delivering the divine message, I will give thee three friends who will aid thee, in all thy strivings.

Man (*gratefully*). The Lord be praised!

Angel. (*Approaches the three figures.*) No longer shall ye harass Man. Instead I call upon the three graces, Faith, Hope and Love, to take your places as his constant companions. (*In a loud voice*) Be gone! (*Lights are turned quickly off, and almost instantly turned on. In the brief darkness Fear, Doubt and Worry have thrown off their dark robes and the strands, and are now in white as Faith, Hope, Love.*)

Man (*in amazement*). Bless the Lord, who only doeth wondrous things!

Angel. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his people.

Man. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

Angel. Be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

Man (*slowly*). And forget not all his benefits—and I had forgotten.

Angel. Aye, and many others have done so. (*Pause.*) O, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

Man. This day will I praise him for my blessings. How many I have received!

Angel. And how many hast thou forgotten!

Faith. (*Steps back and with hand on a curtain*

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says.) Thy first great blessing. (*Draws the curtain revealing a tableau. Woman dressed as the conventional Mother.*)

Man (*in surprised whisper*). Mother.
Faith.

"Around the theme of Mother Love, the world
revolves.

Surviving all, surmounting all, stands
Mother Love triumphant.

"To Thee, the guide of baby footsteps,
Sweet singer of old golden lullabys,
Whose loving hand did rock the cradle,
Who calmed my frightened baby cries;

"Whose tender voice soothed every sorrow,
The rock to which I clung with feeble hands;
Who caught me when I would have fallen,
Who saved me from life's treacherous sands.

"To Thee, who dried my tears with kisses,
Who taught me life was love and love was God;
To walk life's path with faith and kindness,
To seek the stars to shun the clod.

"Life hath no greater gift nor blessing
Than Thee, friend of friends, half-divine;
For all that I am or hope ever to be,
Thy love made me, Mother o' Mine."

—*Jackson.*

(CURTAIN)

(*Enter Soloist, stands just in front of inner curtain*

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and sings, "Mother, My Dear" or some appropriate mother song. *Exit Soloist.*)

Man (softly and reproachfully). I had nearly forgotten.

Hope. (*Advances to curtain.*) Behold another blessing! (*Draws curtain*) Thy home! (*Tableau, Mother and three children.*)

"God gave us each a little home
To come back to when we roam;
Low walls and fluted tiles,
Wide windows—a view for miles;
Red firelight and deep chairs,
Dim colors, rows of books,
One picture on each wall,
Not many things at all.
God bless, when winds blow cold,
Our home, and all we know."

(CURTAIN)

(*Chorus off-stage sings "There is Beauty all Around when there's Love at Home," No. 108, Hymnal for American Youth. Man's face lights up with joy as he listens.*)

Man (reproachfully). I was forgetting.

Love. (*Advances to curtain.*) Yet another blessing do I show thee. (*Draws curtain.*) Thy friends!

A faithful friend is a strong defense;
And he that hath found him hath found a treasure.
There is nothing that can be taken in exchange for
a friend;
And his excellency is beyond price.

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He that knoweth the Lord directeth his friendship
aright;
For as he is, so is his neighbor also.
Change not a friend for a thing indifferent,
Neither a true brother for the gold of Ophir

(CURTAIN)

(Singing off-stage, third stanza of "For the Beauty of the Earth." No. 38.)

Man (awed). How could I have forgotten? *(To Angel.)* Why the world is radiant in blessing! How blind I have been!

Angel. Thou art still half-blind. Thou art not seeing clearly even yet. When first I saw thee, thine eyes were on the ground; now thine eyes are upon thyself and the possessions which are peculiarly thine own. Look once again and see the blessings thou dost share with thy brothers, blessings which are thine through the work of others. *(Faith draws the curtain showing Prosperity.)*

(Tableau. Prosperity is a young woman, gowned in gold cloth, crown of flowers in her hair, and sacks of gold in her arms. With her are two little children, one with arms filled with flowers, the other with a basket of fruit.)

Faith. Prosperity blessed the land and brought to thee comforts unknown to previous generation, pleasures unheard of, and leisure undreamed of. All her gifts hast thou accepted and enjoyed.

(CURTAIN)

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Man. The earth is full of the loving-kindness of the Lord.

(Chorus off-stage sings "For the Beauty of the Earth." first and second stanzas, page 38, Hymnal for American Youth.)

Hope. Be not deceived, O Man, Prosperity hath brought thee more than wealth. Behold, her hand maiden, *(draws curtain)*. Education.

Hope.

Wisdom shall enter into thy heart,
And knowledge shall watch over thee;
Understanding shall keep thee.
But be not wise in thine own eyes;
Trust in the Lord with all thy heart
And lean not upon thine own understanding.
In all thy ways acknowledge him,
And he will direct thy path.

(CURTAIN)

(Chorus off-stage sings, "O Lord, Thy Benediction Give." page 281, first three stanzas.)

Love. Once again, O Man, I bid thee look that I may show thee the greatest blessing of the land. *(Draws curtain revealing Christianity.)* There are nations that have wealth and education but not Christianity. Thou art indeed fortunate to be living in a Christian land with all its privileges and blessings.

(CURTAIN)

(Chorus off-stage sings "Immortal Love, Forever Full," page 144, stanzas 1, 2, 3.)

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Man (in rapture). I will bless the Lord and praise his name. For I was brought low and he saved me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul: For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. (*Change to attitude of adoration.*) For thou, O Lord, hath delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

(*Chorus off-stage sings "Immortal Love," fourth stanza.*)

Man (to angel). What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits to me? For I would offer to him the sacrifices of Thanksgiving.

Angel. Freely ye have received, freely give.

Man. Unto whom shall I give?

Angel. Faith will show thee. (*Man looks at Faith inquiringly. She draws the curtain, showing a group of poorly dressed children.*)

Man. Who are these?

Faith. They who know not a mother's care, who must find their homes with strangers or in institutions.

(CURTAIN)

Man. (Gazes intently.) Motherless! (*Curtain opens showing his mother for just a moment.*) (*Man bows head in hands, then after a second lifts face.*) The Lord hath heard my cry. He hath not turned away my prayer, nor his loving kindness from me. But if I regard not these little ones then may he be deaf to my cries. (*To Angel.*) Let me go to them.

Angel. Not yet. There is more to see. (*Man looks toward curtain as Hope draws it aside, showing men, women, boys, and girls.*)

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Man. Who are these?

Hope. Members of broken homes, the sad, the sorrowful, the neglected.

(CURTAIN)

Man. The Lord will look upon his people with righteousness, and the poor with justice. He will save the children of the needy, and redeem them that are oppressed. And I will be his helper. (*Starts toward group.*)

Angel. Wait, thou hast not seen all.

Man. What more must I see?

Angel. The children of all lands are the children of God. (*Love draws curtain, showing group of foreigners.*)

Love. In every nation under the sun are those whom the Lord loveth but many know not of his love for them.

Angel. Alas, how many knoweth not the Son nor the Father.

Man (alert). I will go to them. I will tell them of his loving kindness, and the Lord shall direct my steps. Thus shall I show thanksgiving for his gifts unto me.

Angel. How canst thou go to them and also care for the fatherless at home?

Man (thoughtfully). I will first share what I have of the gifts that have been given to me, then I will find my place to give service and will render it willingly.

Angel. Thou hast spoken well. (*Faith draws curtain revealing a huge cornucopia which Hope and Love bring to center front.*)

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Man. Prosperity shall bring her treasures for the needy. (*Enter prosperity from right, followed by the two children who place gifts in the huge cornucopia, first the bags of gold, then the fruit, and the flowers which should be so arranged that the blossoms fall prettily over the edge. They then take their places at left.*)

Angel. The gifts of education shall they also have. (*Enter Education who places her scroll in the cornucopia.*)

Education. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom and the man that getteth understanding. For the gaining of it is better than the gaining of silver, and the profit thereof than fine gold. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. (*Takes place left of Prosperity.*)

Man. Unto the uttermost parts of the earth shall Christianity be carried, until none of the children of men can say, "I know not the Lord."

(*Enter Christianity who places a cross at upper end of cornucopia.*)

Christianity. This is the will of the Father that not one of his little ones shall perish. As the Father hath sent me, so send I you. (*Takes place at right of Prosperity.*)

Man (*wistfully*). Would that my friends might know the joy of this giving, and share with me in this service.

(*Singing off-stage, "My God, I Thank Thee," No. 39. After first line is sung, the leader appears at entrance.*)

Angel. Hark! (*Enter Chorus, singing, passes by*

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cornucopia, each person putting in an offering. Chorus takes place across back of stage:)

Man (joyfully). Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving. Sing praises unto our God for he hath not dealt so with any other nation. Sing unto him kings and rulers, men and children.

(Enter children who take places just back of cornucopia. Sing, "All the Happy Children," page 288, then place their gifts in cornucopia and take places in front of chorus, center back!)

Man (in exultation). Praise ye the Lord. Let all the people praise him. *(Turns to Faith, Hope, Love.)* I cannot go to all but ye can. Now that I really believe that Divine Love surrounds me, that radiant Hope is undaunted, and living Faith eternal, I shall not again falter in my thanksgiving. Free yourselves and take your messages to all mankind that they, too, may return thanks. *(The three step forward and seem to detach the invisible bands from Man's shoulders and from their own. They take the offering plates and go down the aisles taking the offering. If more are needed, have other girls in white ready to rise in their place in front seat with their offering plates, and take their allotted aisles. As soon as Faith, Hope, and Love pick up the plates the group on the stage sing, "Come Ye Thankful People," page 288, and continue singing until offering is taken. It is brought forward and placed at opening of cornucopia.)*

Angel (coming to center of platform). Praise ye the Lord, for his loving kindness endureth forever. Praise him all ye people. Praise him in the sanctuary. Praise him with song and instruments. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord.

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Group leaves platform in following order: Angel, Man, Faith, Hope, Love, Prosperity, Education, Christianity, others. Congregation stands and joins with those on platform in singing, "Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart," No. 1. Singing continues until all are off stage and out of sight of audience.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

In Pantomime and Song

Characters

CHORUS

FIRST READER

SECOND READER

MARY

THE ANGEL

JOSEPH

PILGRIMS, men, women, children

THREE OR FOUR SHEPHERDS

THREE KINGS

TEN CHERUBS, little children

ANGEL SOLOIST, a young woman

Note. Sometimes it happens that there are not persons enough to put on a pageant which requires much speaking. The following arrangement is composed of Scripture passages and hymns. One or two readers, a chorus, and soloist furnish words and music, while others give the story in pantomime. No memorizing is necessary, as the readers make use of scrolls to hold their parts and so may read them. One reader should stand at extreme right-front of the platform, the other in a corresponding position, left.

A frame or arch makes a most effective setting for

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the reader, giving the appearance of a framed picture. The frame may be constructed with pieces of wood and then gilded or, if preferred, the frame may be covered with white cloth and decorated with greens or flowers. The readers remain in place throughout the pageant.

Costumes and Properties

First and Second Readers may be dressed in copy of Fra Angelico's angels. (*See pictures of them.*)

One in blue decorated with gold stenciling, the other in red with gold stenciling. The wings should be made of white metal cloth which has been tinted a soft flesh color; the upper part of the wing only should be wired, the lower part, being left free, moves gracefully with the movements of the body. Haloes may be made from circular pieces of cardboard, gilded and decorated with an inch border and worn at the back of the head. A ribbon band crossing the forehead, encircling the head, and being passed through the center of the halo will hold it in place.

The Angel may wear long, flowing white robes, the wings being tinted in varying shades of pink with gold markings. A halo should be worn. She carries a lily in her hand.

The other angels and cherubs—simple robes of white; white stockings, no shoes, no halo. They may wear bands of gold ribbon in their hair or wreaths of flowers. Their wings should be small and simple; butterfly bows of tarleton will serve the purpose very well.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

Mary. White undergarment, blue overgarment; over the head a long, flowing covering of blue with a white or flame lining. See madonna pictures, and copy.

Shepherds. Straight undergarments of burlap, a stitched mantle hanging from the shoulders, bright colored turbans, bare arms and legs. A staff for each. If crooks are desired they may be cut from cardboard and fastened onto the ends of poles. The place where they are attached will not be noticed if wound with brown crepe paper.

Kings. The youngest of the three kings may be dressed like a Persian, in rich, gorgeous robes.

An older man, dressed as an Egyptian king.

The oldest, as an Arabian. See Hornblower and Houston, "Ancient Persian, Egyptian and Arabian Costumes" for suggestions. The idea is to have the kings all gorgeously dressed but in different style.

One carries a casket of gold, which may be made by covering a box with moulding clay and gilding it. Cardboard discs covered with gold paper may represent money if desired. If so, they should be removed from the casket and dropped from the hand onto the floor.

The second king carries a beautiful urn from which incense is rising. The third has a small box supposed to hold the myrrh.

Pilgrims. Oriental costumes. Bright colored blankets, shawls, covers, and scarfs may be used, but not too many of them. The women and girls should wear loose robes reaching to the floor, and with long pointed sleeves. The costumes should

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be of the deeper shades, with a sash of bright color or striped material tied about the waist. Scarfs or mantles are worn over the head. The long scarfs may be fastened in various ways. One may choose to fasten hers close to the head and under the flowing ends. Another will fasten hers over the lengths. A wide mantle may be worn if desired; this falls from the head over shoulders and dress. Jewelry should be generously used. No modern shoes should be worn. Sandals may be worn or the characters may walk in their stockings.

The men and boys should wear tunics of white or bright colors, with long but not pointed sleeves. A sleeveless coat of bright material may be worn over the tunic. This coat should be open all the way down the front, not meeting even at the neck. The coat may be easily made from a blanket or cloth of sufficient width and length, by folding the outer edges in upon the cloth, about ten inches, and sewing them. The sewed part rests on the shoulders. This makes a straight back and two straight fronts. The arms are under the mantle but free.

On his head the Oriental usually wears a square of bright colored material. One end is turned in and placed over the forehead, and the square so draped that it falls over the shoulders. It is held in place by means of a twisted piece of black cloth. A turban effect may be made from the square or scarf if preferred. This requires no sewing but is wound about the head and the

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

end tucked securely under. If correctly done it will not become loosened in hours of wearing.

First Reader. Now it came to pass that in the days of old the Lord spake unto Jeremiah, saying, "Behold the days come that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel. I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

Second Reader. Another prophet, Isaiah, spake and said, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and to comfort all that mourn; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

First Reader. And verily the prophecies have been fulfilled, and the manner thereof shall be revealed unto you. (*Singing by chorus, behind curtain, "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing."*)

First Reader. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was

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on this wise. In the city of Nazareth, dwelt a woman by the name of Mary who was betrothed to a man named Joseph. Now, Mary was fair and lovely and of a pure heart. There appeared unto her an angel, saying, "Hail, Thou, that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee." But Mary was greatly troubled at his saying and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. And the angel said unto her, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And behold thou shalt bear a son and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and of his kingdom there shall be no end." And Mary said unto the angel, "How shall this be?" And the angel answered and said unto her, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the favor of the Most High shall overshadow thee." And Mary said, "Behold, the handmaiden of the Lord; Be it unto me according to thy word." And the angel departed from her.

(Curtain is raised showing Mary seated alone in the house. If no curtain use screens. Suddenly the place is flooded with light and the angel appears. Mary, startled, rises to her feet. The angel lifts her hand and looks kindly at Mary. Mary appears listening but puzzled. After a second Mary kneels with arms outstretched toward angel. Angel places a lily in Mary's hand and departs. Mary remains kneeling with face aglow. Golden light should play above her head.) A voice behind the curtain, but near to Mary reads: "My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour. For behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

(CURTAIN)

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

SCENE II

Second Reader. Now it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And all went to enroll themselves, everyone to his own city and Joseph also went up from Galilee unto Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to enroll himself with Mary, his wife. (*Singing behind curtain, "O Little Town of Bethlehem."* *Curtain raised.* *Long line of pilgrims, men, women, and children, singly and in groups, pass by, all looking sad and weary. Half way in the line comes Mary leaning heavily on Joseph's arm.*)

(CURTAIN)

SCENE III

First Reader. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the

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highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

(Singing behind curtain, "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks." Curtain raised showing shepherds, about a fire. One by one they prepare for the night, lying on the ground. After a short pause the place is suddenly flooded with light. The angel appears. The shepherds start up in astonishment and, half sitting up, appear to listen to her words. Chorus of angels enter singing, "All Glory be to God on High." Light fades, angels disappear. Men remain in same position for a moment, then rise slowly, look at one another, point toward left and slowly leave stage. Chorus behind scene sings first stanza of "First Noel.")

SCENE IV

Reader. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, "In Bethlehem, of Judea, for thus it is written by the

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel." Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, "Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also." When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

(Singing behind curtain, second and third stanzas of "First Noel." Curtain raised. Three kings pass across stage with eyes fixed on star which moves ahead of them. This may be a mechanical arrangement by use of wires, with an electric light under a silver star, or it may be represented by an angel in white holding aloft a star in her hands. In the latter case a flashlight should be used under the star. This will give a most beautiful effect and can be moved slowly and smoothly.)

(CURTAIN)

SCENE V

Reader. And it came to pass that while Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem that her days were fulfilled.

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And she brought forth her first born son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn.

(Singing behind scene, "Silent Night." Curtain raised, reveals the manger, right. An amber light placed under white cloth and laid in the manger will cause a radiance to come from it. Mary is seated at the head, and Joseph stands just back of her, both looking down into the manger. A group of little children, dressed as cherubs, appear and half surround the manger and Mary and Joseph, while an angel [older] sings stanzas two, three, and four of "Sleep Holy Babe.")

Reader. And the shepherds came with haste and found both Mary and Joseph and the babe and they worshipped the child, and gave praise to God for the things they had seen and heard.

(The shepherds enter, hesitatingly, at left, advance a step or two toward center, then kneel at different heights so as to make an effective picture. After a moment they rise and reverently take places at left.)

Reader. And when the Wise Men had followed the star it led them to the place where the child lay. And when they came into the house they saw the young child with his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh. *(The three kings come down the aisle from the rear of the church singing, "We Three Kings of Orient Are," or it may be sung by a choir as the kings move down the aisle in silence. Each in turn kneels and presents his gift to the child, then takes his place near the shepherds in such a manner as to form a well balanced picture, the*

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manger, Mary, Joseph, the angel, and the cherubs on one side, and the shepherds and kings on the opposite.)

(Angel soloist steps forward and sings first stanza of "O, Come All Ye Faithful," the cherubs join in chorus. She sings second stanza, and cherubs, shepherds, and wise men join chorus. She sings third stanza, and group on stage and chorus off-stage join in chorus. After fourth stanza the audience stands and joins in chorus. Repeat chorus with all singing.)

(CURTAIN)

If no curtain is used, those on stage may pass quietly from platforms as organ plays softly the same hymn until the last person is off.

A SHEPHERD BOY'S ADORATION

A Play for Christmas

Characters

EZRA	}	Shepherds.
DAVID		
JOASH		
ABEL		
Boy, of Twelve, Son of Abel.		
ANGEL SOLOIST		
ANGEL CHORUS		
THREE KINGS		
JOSEPH		
MARY		

Costumes

Shepherds. Straight undergarments of burlap, a stitched mantle hanging from the shoulders, bright colored turbans, bare arms and legs. A staff for each. If crooks are desired they may be cut from cardboard and fastened onto the ends of poles. The place where they are attached will not be noticed if wound with brown crepe paper.

Boy. A plain straight tunic of yellow, no mantle or turban.

A SHEPHERD BOY'S ADORATION

Kings. See Hornblower and Houston, "Ancient Persian, Egyptian and Arabian Costumes." The kings should all be in oriental garb, yet each different in predominating color and design.

Angel. Long flowing robes of white. Wings tinted in soft pink, halo of gold. See direction under First and Second Reader in *The First Christmas*.

Mary. White undergarment, blue mantle which is draped over head and falls gracefully about shoulders and tunic.

Joseph. He is a man some years older than Mary. His costume should be that of a typical Hebrew—a long tunic of white or bright color, over which he wears a rich, dark sleeveless coat, open in front. He should wear long hair and beard. Sandals on his feet.

The angels. Loose, flowing robes of white, no wings or haloes. Bands of gold ribbon about foreheads take place of haloes. No modern shoes should be worn, but sandals or white hose.

SCENE I

Time: Evening.

Scene: On a Hillside outside of Bethlehem.

From behind the curtain comes the sound of voices singing, "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night," first four stanzas; found in any church hymnal.

Curtain is raised revealing a group of shepherds seated on the ground before a small fire. (*Blue light for night.*)

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Ezra. It is good to be away from the crowd and alone with the sheep again.

David. Aye, there have been many going into Bethlehem this day.

Joash. A never-ending line. All night and all day they have been coming. Some of them look nigh spent with their journey.

Ezra. It is a cruel thing to make these Jews return to Bethlehem to be taxed. Methinks Caesar hath some deep laid scheme in mind.

Joash. What more can he do? We are watched and made to obey his slightest command even now.

Ezra. Aye, but he would know how many of us there are and what are our possessions.

Joash. The glory of Israel hath departed. Our prophets are no more.

Ezra. One hath not appeared for a long time but we should not say they are no more.

David. Never did Israel need one more than now.

Ezra. If that is true, one will surely come.

Joash. If he only would! But I have no hope.

David. Speak not so.

Ezra. Hush! Here comes Abel with his boy. Let not the lad hear you speak so. (*Enter Abel and boy.*)

David. Why hath thou brought the lad?

Abel. He often begs to come with me and tonight he plead so hard I could not say him, "nay." (*Boy smiles.*)

David. Were the people still entering the city when you came out?

Abel. Aye, a long line of them. Most of them appeared sullen and angry, as well as weary.

A SHEPHERD BOY'S ADORATION

David. Why should they not be angry? Of course they all are.

Child. Oh, no, not all. There was a beautiful lady who smiled at me.

Abel. All the way out he has talked of this beautiful lady who smiled at him.

Child. She wore a blue mantle, and was riding on a donkey which a man was leading. He did not smile but his face was kind. I was looking at her because she was so beautiful, when she looked up and smiled at me.

Ezra (putting his arm about the child). It is easy to smile at thee, lad. Thou art tired with so much excitement. We must make ready for the night.

Boy. I do not wish to sleep at all. I want to stay awake and watch the stars. They are so bright to-night. See that one which is brighter than all the others.

David. So it is. I do not recall having noticed it before.

Boy. Are the stars brighter here than in town?

David. They seem so.

Abel. Lie down and cease thy talking.

Boy. But I may watch the stars for awhile longer?

Abel. Aye, but speak not. (*All lie down. Boy sits up leaning on elbow. Stage is gradually darkened. Organ plays very, very softly. After a pause the boy sits up quickly and assumes attitude of listening. After a moment speaks.*)

Boy (in loud whisper). Father!

Abel. (*Sits up.*) What is it?

Boy. Do you not hear music?

Abel. Music!

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Boy (*excitedly*). Yes, in the heavens.

Abel. It is the wind. (*Lies down.*)

Boy (*after a pause*). Father, it is not the wind. It is voices singing!

Abel. Thou art excited. I hear nothing.

David. (*Sits up.*) There is something strange about the night. I feel it, too.

Ezra. The excitement in town hath affected us all.

Boy. Look at the sheep! See how they lift their heads. They hear something, too. (*All look left.*)

David. (*Jumps to feet.*) Look at them! They do hear something! (*Light comes on faintly.*)

Ezra. Why, is it dawn already?

David (*hushed tone*). Nay, nay, it cannot be. What is the meaning of this strange night? First the star, and now this light!

Boy. And the music. (*Music increases, a flood of white light on the stage, angel stands before the men.*)

Men (*in awed tones*). Oh!

Boy. Father!

David (*in awe*). An angel! (*Drops to ground and all hide faces.*)

Angel. Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you tidings of great joy which shall be to all people, (*Ezra lifts head and listens*) for there is born unto you this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. (*Other shepherds and child lift their faces.*) And this is the sign unto you. Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. (*Chorus of angels appear. Men again hide faces. Rose light changes into amber. Angels sing last stanza of "While Shepherds Watched*

A SHEPHERD BOY'S ADORATION

Their Flocks by Night." Exit angels. Light vanishes.)

Boy. (After a moment of silence, looks up, and speaks softly.) They have gone. (Men lift faces, look about, then at each other.)

Joash. What doth it mean?

David. A prophet has come!

Abel. But he said a babe!

David. Aye, but it must be a prophet. Let us go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing that is come to pass.

Joash. Aye, let us go. (Men rise to feet. Boy takes hand of father. All start moving slowly as if still stunned and uncertain.)

Abel. It is strange.

David. Aye, it is.

Joash. What can it mean?

Ezra. We shall soon know.

(Exit Shepherds and Boy)

SCENE II

(Singing, off-stage, "There's a Beautiful Star," No. 86, in Hymnal for American Youth.)

(Silhouette of the desert. Lavender light changing to blue. A gauze curtain between audience and characters gives the effect of distance. Camels cut from soft flannel and palm trees from green and brown sateen and sewed onto the gauze curtain will appear to be on the desert when the light is thrown onto the curtain. The result will be most effective. At left and near a camel, as though he had just alighted,

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stands one of the kings. He is watching another who approaches from the R.)

First King. Greetings, brother, what dost thou here?

Second King. My errand is so strange thou wouldst not understand it.

First King. I, too, am on a strange mission, but I am guided by yon star so I do not travel alone.

Second King (with surprise). The star! Thou knowest of the star and why it shines?

First King. To me it lights a pathway to a king.

Second King. To me also.

First King. How didst thou know its message?

Second King. It was revealed to me through prophesy.

First King. It was shown to me through prayer.

Second King. Look! Yonder comes another gazing heavenward. Can he, too, be watching the star?

First King. So it would appear. Let us go to meet him. *(Start toward left as third king enters.)* Greetings, brother. Why comest thou here?

Third King. I saw the two of you in earnest conversation gazing into yonder sky, and I knew you were fellow pilgrims following the star.

Second King. Art thou also following the star?

Third King. Aye. And you?

First and Second Kings. Aye.

First King. It was revealed to me through prophesy.

Second King. It was revealed to me through prayer, after years of study.

Third King. It was revealed to me through suffering. *(Star appears on horizon.)*

A SHEPHERD BOY'S ADORATION

First King. See, it shines again and for all of us.
Let us be going. As we travel each shall tell how he
came to follow the star.

(Exit All)

SCENE III

Singing behind curtain, "Silent Night." Curtain
raised revealing Joseph, Mary, and the manger, right.
Blue light. Mary is seated at right of manger.
Joseph stands just back of manger at Mary's right.
Other light on the stage comes from the amber lights
concealed in the manger. Two tiny cherubs are at
either end of the manger.

Mary. My soul doth magnify the Lord. And
my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he
hath looked upon the low estate of his handmaid: for
behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me
blessed.

Joseph. *(Looks at babe.)* And he shall be called
Jesus.

*(Cherubs sing "Away in a Manger." Enter
Shepherds.)*

Ezra. *(In low tone.)* Look yonder! Is not that
a babe in that manger? *(Kneels.)*

David. Aye. *(Kneels.)*

Child *(softly).* That is the beautiful lady who
smiled at me. *(Kneels.)*

*(Abel smiles at child. All kneel but one, who
sings "What Child is This?", "Ten Christmas Carols,"
Oliver Ditson.)*

*(Angel, appearing at head of manger, sings answer.
Enter angel chorus. The effect is heightened if the*

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angels are on two levels, one a little higher than the other. Angel chorus sings "Come and Worship." Shepherds go slowly forward and kneel. Child still holds hand of father but keeps eyes on Mary. Mary sees him, smiles, and beckons him nearer. Child slowly goes and kneels at foot of manger, nearer than any of the shepherds. Singing ceases. Exit angels.)

Ezra (rising). Come, let us go and tell the things we have seen and heard this night. (Slowly as if awe-struck, the shepherds pass from scene. Abel last with the child holding his hand. At exit child turns and looks again at Mary who smiles at him.)

David (off-stage but close to exit). For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

SCENE IV

Same as Scene III.

Stage darkened. Star is shining over manger. Three kings enter left and stand just within entrance while one sings, "Bethlehem's Star." As solo ends light comes on as in Scene III. The kings move slowly forward toward manger.

First King. (Kneels in front of manger.) Gold I bring to the new-born king. (Rises and steps back L. as second king advances and kneels.)

Second King. Frankincense my gift shall be. (Rises and steps to side of first king. Third king advances.)

A SHEPHERD BOY'S ADORATION

Third King. (Kneels.) Myrrh I bring but why I know not. (Takes place by side of second king. Enter angel.)

Angel. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. (Three kings move toward L. entrance. Just before it is reached, the angel soloist begins to sing, "Come and Worship." The kings with radiant faces turn and face the manger. Shepherds come from R. Angels come from both right and left and join in the singing. The soloist still singing moves off the stage and down center aisle, followed by a group of angels; behind them come Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, the kings, then the remainder of the angels. The angels with faces aglow and eyes uplifted, continue to sing until all have passed out of the room, the singing growing fainter and fainter until it dies away. Lights of amber and soft red should be upon the procession as it leaves the stage.)

THE QUEST OF THE WISE MEN

A Pageant for Christmas

Characters

THE WISE MEN	}	The Arabian
		The Syrian
		The Egyptian

SYRIAN GIRL

JOSEPH

MARY

DAVID

ANGEL WHO SPEAKS

FOUR OTHER ANGELS

ANGEL CHORUS

Note. One of the Wise Men sings. It matters not which one.

Arrangement of Stage

Scene I. The room may be suggested by use of soft gray drapes, at back and sides. An opening of about two and one half feet should be left between the drapes on one side to suggest a doorway. Another drape should be hung outside it, and about two feet distant from opening. This will shut out any view off-stage and will make it possible for characters to enter and leave without touching drapes.

QUEST OF THE WISE MEN

Scene II. Stable. Heavy dark paper may be used to suggest a plain rough interior. A little straw scattered over floor will add to the appearance. The curtain to conceal the manger should be of brown burlap, or other dark, coarse material.

Manger. May be constructed of wood and placed in pile of straw. The manger should not have too new an appearance. The hay should partially cover it.

Properties

Scroll. A piece of heavy paper, 12 by 18 inches, at either end of which is attached a small wooden rod. The paper should be rolled a few times over the rods. The words to be read may be pasted within the roll.

Chest. A box stained dark, and as large as an ordinary trunk. An oriental drape may be thrown over it if desired. This will add to the appearance of the room.

Box for Gold. It may be an oriental box, or one made, gilded, and decorated.

Urn. A small vase may be used.

Jar for Myrrh. A jar of pottery.

Star. May be made of paper and attached to a high-power electric light.

Costumes

The costumes of the three Wise Men should differ, but all should be Oriental. See Hornblower and

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Houston. "Ancient Persian, Egyptian and Arabian Costumes."

For costumes for Joseph, Mary, David, Shepherd, and angels, see Costumes for *The First Christmas*.

Time: Evening.

Scene: Interior of Oriental home.

The room should be dimly lighted. A chest or cabinet is at R. Two cushions near front. One rear. The Syrian at front R. stands as though gazing out upon the hills. He should not stand directly facing front, yet he must be in such a position that his words may be clearly heard by the audience. After a moment or two a girl enters L., with water jar on her shoulder. She walks slowly across room and places her jar on floor, rear. Then seats herself and picks up her embroidery but turns eyes toward man. The Syrian remains motionless. Enter Arabian, L. He pauses just within the entrance and gazes intently at Syrian, who does not move.

Arabian (after a pause). Watchman, tell us of the night, what its signs of promise are.

Syrian (without turning). Trav'ler, o'er yon mountain height, see that glory beaming star. (*Points up and out.*)

Arabian. Watchman, doth its beauteous ray aught of joy or hope foretell?

Syrian. Trav'ler, yes: it brings the day, promised day of Israel. Traveler, let thy wand'rings cease; near, within a quiet home. (*Turns and faces Ara-*

QUEST OF THE WISE MEN

bian.) Trav'ler, lo, the Prince of Peace, Lo, the Son of God is come.

Arabian. At last. (*Salutes the man.*)

Syrian. (*Advances toward Arabian.*) Who art thou that knoweth the stars?

Arabian. A traveler from Arabia's far shores.

Syrian. How comest thou here?

Arabian. It is a long tale.

Syrian (*with gesture*). Seat thy self, for thou must be weary and I fain would hear thy story. (*Men seat themselves. Girl advances with goblets on tray which she offers, first to Arabian, then to man. After drinking men return goblets. The girl carries tray to rear of room, then takes jar and quietly leaves stage.*)

Arabian. Thou, too, art interested in the stars?

Syrian. In one star in particular, for which I have watched, lo, these many years.

Arabian. (*Leans toward man, gazes into his eyes, almost in a whisper asks.*) And thou hath seen it?

Syrian. (*Hesitates.*) I think so.

Arabian. (*Relaxes, with evident relief.*) Thy words give me courage, for, I, too, have watched and waited for the appearance of a certain star.

Syrian. Tell me how thou first heardst of this star.

Arabian. My father was an astrologer of great repute. The stars were as a book to him. One day while crossing the desert he met, when the caravans stopped to rest, an old, old man who also knew the stars—not as my father did, but as one who could see more and could foretell marvelous things. He told my father that it was written in the sacred books that sometime a king would come, who should rule the world in peace, who should unite all king-

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doms under one banner. Wars would cease and men become brothers. The coming of the king would be heralded by a star of exceeding brightness, which would lead the way to the king's birthplace. As long as he lived my father nightly scanned the heavens for the appearance of this star. When he grew old and feeble and knew that he could no longer watch for its coming, he told me the strange prophecy and charged me to watch as he had.

Syrian. Hast thou done so?

Arabian. I have, night after night, month after month, and year after year, but no unusual star has appeared until now. A few nights since I went upon the hilltop at eventide, as was my custom. I noted a star of unusual brightness. All night I watched. It appeared the next night, and the next, and seemed to be moving. I am convinced that it is the long awaited star. I hastily sold all my possessions for gold, mounted my camel, and followed the star.

Syrian. Why didst thou stop at this house?

Arabian. The star hath led me thus far. But to-night it doth not appear to move. Thy door was open. I entered to ask where I am and whether there is news of the arrival of a new king. When I beheld thee at the window, I felt that thou, too, knew of the appearance of the star. Is it not so?

Syrian. Aye, for a long time, I, too, have watched for its appearance. I have that to tell thee which will cause thee surprise. My father was a goodly man who ever held high thoughts. It was his custom to go out at night and commune with the stars. He seemed able to read through them the thoughts of their creator. He it was, I am convinced, who spake

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with thy father and told him of the coming of the star.

Arabian (in amazement). Thy father!

Syrian. Yea, for thy story is like unto that he so often told me. He had his information from an old prophet of Israel. Shall I show thee the exact words, written by this sire of old and treasured by my father?

Arabian (excited). If thou wouldst!

Syrian. (Goes to chest from which he takes a scroll; returns to Arabian.) In the scroll are written the words the prophet told my father. There are three messages, the first is: "Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come that is to be a ruler in Israel."

Arabian. And yonder town is Bethlehem?

Syrian. Aye. The second word is this: "His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away and his kingdom one which shall not be destroyed."

Arabian (in awed tone). Everlasting!

Syrian. Now listen to the third: "There shall come a star out of Israel, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel."

Arabian. Strange, strange. And this Bethlehem, how far away is it?

Syrian. It is close by. So thoroughly did my father believe these words that he left his home in Syria and came here to live. He was convinced that when the star did appear it would shine over Bethlehem. All our wealth we have changed into frankincense. My father feared to keep too much gold

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about. Then, too, it is becoming that a king should receive sweet incense. (*Rises, goes to chest, takes out an urn, and returns.*) Within this jar is the most costly to be found.

Arabian. We will go together in search of this king. (*Goes to window.*) The star seems to stand still. Shall we go into Bethlehem?

Syrian. (*Hesitates.*) Yea, we will go. Strange after all these years that I should hesitate but the nearness of this king overwhelms me. Who am I to enter into his presence?

Arabian (*humbly*). And I? Just two worshipers we are who would do him reverence.

Syrian. Let us be gone. (*The men leave the stage.*)

(CURTAIN)

SCENE II

Night on the outskirts of Bethlehem. Blue light for night. A bright star shines overhead, left of center. (*Enter the two men, R.*)

Arabian. There it is! Didst thou ever see a more glorious sight?

Syrian. It is of marvelous brightness.

Arabian. See how its rays seem to rest upon yonder town.

Syrian. Shall we go on?

Arabian. We must. After all these years of waiting and watching I would not give up the quest.

Syrian (*pointing left*). Behold, the stranger! Dost thou know him?

QUEST OF THE WISE MEN

Arabian. Nay, but his clothes proclaim him a traveler?

Syrian. An Egyptian.

Arabian. What doeth he here?

Syrian. We must ask him. Could it be that he, also, is seeking the star?

Arabian. Greetings, stranger. Whence comest thou and what thy mission?

Egyptian. I come from the land of Egypt and I seek a man versed in the stars.

Arabian and Syrian. The stars?

Egyptian. Yea, I seek a man who can tell me of yon bright star.

Syrian. Why art thou interested?

Egyptian. (*Hesitates, looks intently at men.*) It is a new star. It hath not shone before.

Syrian. Why should that concern thee?

Egyptian. I would know its meaning.

Arabian (*softly*). And whose coming it foretells?

Egyptian. (*Turns quickly to Arabian.*) These are strange words of thine.

Arabian. But thou seemest to understand them.

Egyptian (*quickly*). Art thou interested in the star, too?

Arabian. Aye, and he, (*indicates Syrian*) too.

Egyptian. Do ye know what the star may mean?

Syrian. The coming of a King.

Arabian. Whose kingdom is the world.

Egyptian (*joyfully*). Thy knowledge is as mine. (*Extends hand to each.*) Brothers, indeed.

Syrian. From what source didst thou learn of the star and its relation to the new king?

Egyptian. Through sorrow and suffering. My

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first-born was taken from me and my heart was broken. One whom I trusted proved false, and my faith in mankind was shattered. I sought for peace from our gods but it came not. In agony of spirit I cried for something that should satisfy the aching within my breast. At last I chanced to think of an aged holy man who lived by himself in the desert. One who never more visited the towns but who spent his days in prayer to the gods. Some said he was beside himself with too much praying; others said he was controlled by a devil; but others, a few, said he was one who was loved by the gods. To him I went alone at night. Seven days I lived with him in the desert. Long hours I talked until I had told him all my sorrows. Sometimes he spoke to me, sometimes he sang to me, sometimes he besought the gods for me. Gradually the blackness of disappointment and the pain of sorrow were eased. Slowly, so slowly I scarce knew it was happening, peace stole over my spirit. On the last night before I was to leave him we sat out under the stars, and he told me of a prophecy now nearly forgotten but which promised that a king should one day come whose kingdom should be the earth, and of whose dominion there should be no end. The sign that he had come would be a star of exceeding brightness which would lead men to the king. A few nights ago yonder star appeared. None like it has shone in my time. Quickly I made my way to the man in the desert. (*Pause.*)

Syrian. What said he?

(*Egyptian sadly shakes head.*)

Arabian (with disappointment). It is not the star?

Egyptian. Nay, not that, he spake not. I found

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him as if in prayer with a glory not of earth on his countenance, but his spirit had departed. (*Men bow heads. After a pause Egyptian continues.*) But the star still shone, so I followed and it brought me here. What know ye of the star?

Syrian. Much the same as thou. We, too, have been told of the star that should herald the coming of a king. We believe he is now in Bethlehem among the many visitors in the city. We are on our way with our gifts for him.

Egyptian. Gifts?

Arabian. I have brought gold, the amount of my possessions.

Syrian. I have brought frankincense, most precious.

Egyptian. I, too, have brought a gift—myrrh.

Syrian and Arabian (in surprise). Myrrh!

Egyptian. Aye, I wonder if ye will understand.

Syrian. It also is of great value.

Egyptian. Not for that alone did I bring it. Ye know, of course, that myrrh also signifieth suffering and sorrow.

Syrian. Aye, that was why the mention of thy gift caused us to be surprised.

Egyptian. It was through suffering and sorrow that I first learned of the king. I know that this new king will also taste sorrow and suffering ere he shall bring peace to the world. I thought, perhaps, through my gift of myrrh he would understand my sympathy for him in his great task.

Syrian. It is well thought. Shall not we three journey on together and present our gifts at the same time?

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Egyptian. It pleaseth me well to have companions for the remainder of the way. See, is not the star brighter?

Arabian. Do not its rays shine more brightly on one certain place yonder?

Syrian. That would be Bethlehem, with its inn where the king would stay were he in the city. Let us hasten.

Arabian (*singing chorus of "We Three Kings of Orient"*). O Star of Wonder, star of might,
Star with royal beauty bright;
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to Thy perfect light. (*The men leave stage.*)

(CURTAIN)

SCENE III

Interior of stable, dimly lighted. At one side is Mary and the manger. A curtain of burlap hides them from the audience. The curtain should be of coarse burlap, or rough material in keeping with what might be found in a stable. (*Enter three Wise Men.*)

Arabian. (*Looks about.*) Surely he cannot be here!

Egyptian. And a babe! How strange!

Syrian. A king born in a stable! There is some mistake. (*Enter Joseph from behind curtain.*)

Joseph. Whom seek ye?

Arabian. One who is to rule the world?

Joseph. What meanest thou?

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Arabian. It hath been revealed to us that a new king has come. We have seen his star in the east and are come to honor him.

Joseph. Strange, strange! Stranger even than the story told by the shepherds.

Wise Men (surprised). Shepherds!

Joseph. They came here, directed by an angel.

Wise Men. An angel!

Joseph. Aye. But wait, one of the shepherds hath but now arrived; he shall tell thee of the marvelous event. (*Goes to entrance, looks out, calls.*) David.

David. (*Appears at entrance.*) I am here.

Joseph. Enter, for here are strangers from the east who would hear thy tale. (*Enter David who approaches Wise Men.*)

David. Why came ye here?

Syrian. We seek one who is to rule the world—a new king.

David (relieved). It is well. Wonderful, indeed, are the things which we saw and heard. (*Wise Men take seats.*) A group of shepherds, we were, watching with our flocks in the field. Suddenly a bright light filled the sky and an angel stood before us. We were terrified and fell to the ground. The angel said, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, for there is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the king." Then she told us to arise and go to Bethlehem and worship the child. "This shall be a sign unto you," she said. "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. The light grew still brighter, and suddenly a host of angels appeared singing, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace,

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good will to men." Then the angel and the chorus departed, the light vanished and we were alone on the hillside—just a group of shepherds. (*Wise Men look at each other in awe.*)

Syrian. How wonderful!

Egyptian. Marvelous!

Arabian (softly). Marvelous!

David. After the angels had departed and we recovered from our terror we recalled the message that bade us seek the child. Some one had to remain with the sheep, so I agreed to stay while the others should return to Bethlehem. When they had found the child one of them was to straightway return to me. It seemed a long while before I saw, in the distance, two men hurrying toward me. I could tell by their manner that they were greatly agitated. When at last they came to me, they could scarce tell me what had happened. This I learned, that they had hurried to Bethlehem, had gone to the inn and asked for one born king of the Jews. None was there, but the inn-keeper told of strangers in the stable.

Egyptian. No one seemed to know where he was to be born. We inquired of Herod but he knew not. He asked of his councilors but they knew not. Before we left he bade us return to him as soon as we found the new king as he, too, would worship him.

David. The shepherds had forgotten, in their excitement, that the angel had said they would find the child in a manger. They entered this stable (*with lowered voice*) and here they found the babe, even as it was told by the angel.

Wise Men. Here?

David. Aye, here. When they had seen and

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worshipped him they returned to me and I came. (*With face aglow and uplifted.*) I, too, have seen and worshipped the King!

Arabian. (*Rises.*) He is here now? (*Other Wise Men rise.*)

Syrian. Where is he?

Joseph (*pointing to curtain*). Behind yonder curtain. Come and see the young child and his mother. (*All approach curtain. Joseph draws curtain, revealing Mary seated on straw, looking into manger.*)

Joseph. These have come to worship the child.

Mary. (*Lifts head, smiles at men.*) Come and see the babe. (*Wise men approach and kneel, and gaze into manger. After a pause the Arabian speaks.*)

Arabian. Gold I offer to the king for wealth and power shall be his. (*Places his gift near manger.*)

Syrian. Frankincense I bring, costly and precious, for it is meet for him to have the rarest and best.

Egyptian (*with feeling*). Myrrh have I brought. Humble follower I am, yet I offer him compassion and love and sympathy, for I know that sorrow must come even to him. (*Mary reaches out her hand and lightly touches him on the head. Wise Men rise, first Arabian, then Syrian, then, more slowly the Egyptian. They withdraw a step or two, but keep eyes on manger.*)

Mary. (*Looks towards gifts, then into manger.*) Thou holy babe, already men bring thee gifts and call thee *king*. My babe, my tiny child, what doth it mean? Am I not to have thee as *my* child? Dost thou belong to them or to me? (*Bends over manger.*) My babe, must I forever share thee? Must it be so? (*Light appears—angel enters, stands with hand up-*

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lifted, facing manger. Mary sees her, for a moment appears surprised, then slowly a smile breaks over her face; still facing the angel, she stands and extends arms to angel.)

Mary. But for a moment was I weak. So tiny, he is, so helpless, I forgot the purpose of his coming. (*Bends over manger.*) Thou holy child, thy mother will not fail thee or her own purpose. (*Raises eyes to heaven. Sings or recites the Magnificat.*) My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. (*Resumes her seat with face aglow.*)

Angel (to Wise Men). Depart unto thy own countries but return not to Herod for he seeketh the young child to harm him. (*Men listen with surprise, then turn and quickly leave stage.*)

Angel (to Joseph). Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Joseph. (*Looks at Mary in wonderment and fear, glances quickly around.*) Come, let us take the child and flee at once.

Mary. The Lord have mercy. (*She gathers up the child, wrapping him in a covering. This she does with her back partly toward audience. It should be done so carefully and naturally that no one will wonder what is used for the child. Joseph picks up the gifts of the Wise Men, ties them in his scarf, wraps his mantle about him, ready to escort Mary from stage. Four angels enter L. Two lead the way off stage*

and down center aisle, two others follow Mary and Joseph, while the angel on stage watches them and repeats.)

Angel. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. (While she is speaking, more angels come silently onto stage. As she finishes all on the platform begin to sing, "Angels from the Realm of Glory," and pass slowly off the platform and down center aisle in twos. They sing as they go with faces uplifted and glowing. Out through the entrance they pass. The singing grows fainter and fainter until it dies away. As they leave the platform they should pass through amber light.)

(If preferred, the angel chorus may be omitted. The five angels only escort Mary and Joseph from stage while choir, off-stage, sings "Angels from the Realm of Glory.")

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